PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, July 24, 2007 ★★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 226 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

A VISIBLY CONFIDENT President Macapagal-Arroyo delivers her State of the Nation Address. Behind her are Senate President Manuel Villar and Speaker Jose de Venecia. LYN RILLON

GMA: Don't count me out

But won't block anyone's 2010 presidential ambition

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WITH 2010 ON HER MIND, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO indicated in her State of the Nation Address that she would step down when her six-year term ends in three years.

But she served notice that she should not be treated as a lame-duck President.

"I am not an obstacle to anyone's ambition. But make no mistake," Ms Arroyo said in the 56-minute Sona at the joint opening of the 14th Congress at the House of Representatives in Quezon City.

A beaming Ms Arroyo, dressed in a red *terno*, said she "will not stand idly by when anyone gets in the way of the national interest and tries to block the national vision. From where I sit, I can tell you, a President is always as strong as she wants to be."

It was the most-applauded part of her speech. The 59-second round of applause was accompanied by a standing ovation.

In her seventh Sona since she was swept into office in 2001 following the People Power revolt that ousted President Joseph Estrada, Ms Arroyo never looked or sounded more confident in saying that she would be a strong leader who would put the country on the road to First World status, with the poor becoming a robust middle class, in 20 years.

"The state of the nation is strong. Yours truly, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines," Ms Arroyo said dramatically to end her Sona.

GMA/ A15

JDV elected to 5th term as House Speaker

By Christian V. Esguerra and Norman Bordadora

IN THE END, IT ALL BOILED down to who had the numbers.

Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia yesterday was elected to an unprecedented fifth term as Speaker of the House of Representatives following a lengthy, chaotic debate described by some lawmakers as a sham.

It got to a point where, for a while, it seemed uncertain that the House would be able to elect a Speaker before President Macapagal-Arroyo arrived to deliver her State of the Nation Address.

De Venecia's election came barely an hour before Ms Arroyo walked in.

"This is a sham procedure," Camarines Rep. Luis Villafuerte,

JDV ELECTED/ A6

Congress urged to pass laws to end slays

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

UNABLE TO STOP THE EXTRAjudicial killings, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday asked Congress to enact laws that would impose the "harshest penalties" on those behind politically motivated killings, including "rogue elements" of the military.

"We must wipe this stain from our democratic record," Ms Arroyo said in her State of the Nation Address, adding that she wanted to "stop human rights abuses whatever the excuse."

CONGRESS/ A15

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo poses with Rep. Nikki Prieto-Teodoro, wife of newly appointed Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro. Nikki took over her husband's old seat in Tarlac. EDWIN BACASMAS

GMA takes country on tour of super regions

By Michael Lim Ubac

FOR ABOUT AN HOUR YESTERday, the country was given a tour of the super regions by President Macapagal-Arroyo who made sure that every project—whether undertaken by her allies or political foes—was fully accounted for.

The President's message to the nation was clear: Everyone will get a share of the national pie in the remainder of her term as her administration pursues a policy of national reconciliation.

To prove that the country was on its way to progress, Ms Arroyo reported in a well-applauded State of the Nation Address (Sona) before a joint session of Congress on the unprecedented investments in infrastructure in the countryside from Dipolog City and the "beautiful but isolated" island of Masbate to Bangui Bay in Ilocos Norte.

She said these projects in the

GMA TAKES/ A15

Sona? Erap prefers sauna

By Jocelyn R. Uy

INSTEAD OF LISTENING TO President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address (Sona), jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada did something more enjoyable and refreshing—he had a sauna.

Estrada also did some calisthenics and made the rounds of his piggery, poultry and vegetable garden in his Tanay, Rizal, rest house, where he is detained on plunder charges.

SONA?/ A6

Pretty faces, dresses light up Batasan

By Cheche Moral
Lifestyle

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A pretty young face to enliven politics' rather drab version of a red-carpet event.

Audrey Zubiri, who arrived with husband Sen. Miguel Zubiri at Monday's joint session of the 14th Philippine Congress, said she had to wait until the 11th hour before ordering her Rajo Laurel *terno*.

"*Mahirap na*," she said, obviously referring to the hotly con-

PRETTY/ A14

Villar keeps Senate presidency

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL Villar yesterday retained his hold on the third highest position in the land at the cost of a divided opposition.

Villar was elected by 14 colleagues—nine from the administration, two independent and three from the opposition—who formed the new Senate majority bloc.

The remaining eight opposition senators who called their group the "Solid 8" formed the new minority bloc led by Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr.

The vote was marked by

VILLAR / A6

More than infra, GMA must turn over new leaf

By Cielito F. Habito

COMMENTARY

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo asks in her State of the Nation Address (Sona) that no one stand in the way of the people's well-being and the nation's progress.

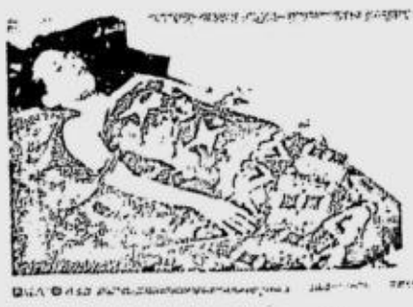
While we like to say that meaningful change rests with each individual Filipino, the general will to change will not be there unless and until those in power whose actions and decisions shape our very futures convince us that they will not stand in the way.

In the end, we need more than eloquent, feel-good speeches from the national leadership. We need the President to genuinely turn over a new leaf and begin to exercise principled leadership and political will.

We need to see actions, decisions and appointments that demonstrate to us convincingly that true change is indeed at hand.

Still, much of what has held us

MORE THAN/ A6



NEWS / A2
Filipino-directed 'Tuli' wins grand jury award in gay film fest in California

BUSINESS / B1
San Miguel to bid for Calaca power plant

WORLD / A19
'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows' breaks sales records

SPORTS / A21
Harrington wins British Open after day of drama

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2007

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will continue to experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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MILITARY POISED TO AVENGE MARINES

Esperon gives green light

By Christine O. Avendaño and Edwin O. Fernandez, *Inquirer Mindanao*

ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF GEN. HERMOgenes Esperon Jr., yesterday gave the go-signal for a massive strike against Moro separatists in Basilan after the deadline passed on Sunday for the rebels to hand over those responsible for the killing of 14 Marines two weeks ago.

Esperon gave the order even as the ceasefire panels of the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday issued a joint resolution calling on the military and the Moro rebels to observe maximum restraint while the July 10 incident in Basilan, in which 10 Marines were beheaded, was being investigated and negotiations were underway to resolve it peacefully.

The military has reportedly deployed up to 5,000 Marine and Army troops, backed by Navy and Air Force teams as well as members of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographic Unit (Cagfu). The assault force, led by newly created Task Force Thunder, is led by Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban, deputy chief of the Western Mindanao Command. The overall operations commander in Basilan is Lt. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, head of Wesmincom.

The MILF had admitted it was behind the ambush of the Marines who were on their way back to their base in Isabela after conducting a search for kidnapped Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi. (Nine days later, Bossi was released, not in Basilan, but in Lanao del Norte.) But MILF leaders denied that its forces were behind the beheading and mutilation of the Marines.

Find mutilators

Bas Sattar Ali, MILF representative in the Basilan Local Monitoring Team, urged the government to find out who were really behind the beheading of the Marines "before pointing an accusing finger at us."

"They might unearth the real story behind the attack," he said, suggesting that politicians and warlords may have been involved.

Ali said they did not want to engage the Marines further, but if attacked, "we will defend our territory to our last breath."

Meanwhile, civilian residents in the area of the killing are fleeing their homes.

"They have cordoned off our position. The fighting may erupt at anytime," MILF chief negotiator Mohaqher Iqbal told the INQUIRER by phone.

Maj. Eugene Batara, Wesmincom spokesperson, said, however, the military was still awaiting the release of warrants of arrest by the Department of Justice to back their punitive action.

Maj. Basilio Pooten, chief legal officer for the Marines and representative of the Judge Advocate General's Office, told the INQUIRER that they named MILF commanders Hassan Ansami and Suhud Lumaya and more than 300 John and Jane Does as the main respondents in the murder cases.

"The problem can still be patched up through peaceful means. The government should listen to the call of peace advocates to adjourn any plan that will destroy the peace talks because thousands of people will be affected," Iqbal said.

He warned that once the fighting starts, there is a possibility it would escalate to other parts of in Mindanao.

Beefed-up Lanao forces

Eid Kabalu, speaking for the MILF, said they had information the military had also beefed up its forces in Lanao.

In Cotabato City, Brig. Gen. Edgardo Gurrea, a member of the coordinating committee on the cessation of hostilities, met quickly with his counterpart in the MILF, Von al-Haq, and International Monitoring Team (ITM) head of mission Maj. Gen. Dato Ismael Ahmad Khan.

Their joint resolution called for the creation of a fact-finding committee to be composed of representatives from both sides and the Malaysian-led IMT "to determine the proximate cause of the incident and possible violations of the ceasefire agreement, pinpoint persons responsible for acts of atrocities, and recommend measures to prevent its occurrence."

The joint resolution also called for the creation of a Mobile Joint Monitoring and Assistance Team (Mobile JMAT) composed of representatives from both sides, the local government units and civil society groups. *With reports from Julie S. Alipala and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

'What about Indon priest's case?'

By Nikko Dizon

AS THE EUPHORIA OVER THE RElease of Fr. Giancarlo Bossi swept the nation, the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) rued the slow progress of the investigation into the death of Indonesian missionary Fr. Fransiskus Madhu.

SVD missionaries said they were still awaiting the police determination of the motive for the murder of the 30-year-old priest, killed more than 100 days ago.

"The case has made a little progress," said Fr. Jerome Adriatico, SVD provincial superior of the SVD northern province.

Adriatico was quoted in an article posted over the weekend on CBCP-News, an online magazine of the Catholic bishops' organization.

Madhu, who came from Indonesia's predominantly Catholic Flores Island, was killed on April 1 as he prepared for Palm Sunday Mass at Mabongtot Elementary School in Lubuagan, Kalinga.

The young priest was shot five times with an armalite rifle.

Police identified and later arrested the prime suspect, Nestor Wailan, alias Sukman, and three other men.

But the SVD lamented that "the case is still under investigation and the motive for the killing has not been established."

The CBCP article said that 100 days after the killing, a group of Indonesian Catholics protested at the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta and demanded that the Philippine government "expedite the murder case of Fr. Madhu."

"It has been three months now since he was murdered. There has been a lot of talk, a lot of promises, a lot of press releases regarding the solution of his murder, but up to now, they are just talk," Fr. Agercio Orbos, mission secretary of the SVD central province, said in the CBCP article.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz, Pangasinan archbishop and former CBCP president, said the government's treatment of the cases of the two missionaries were "poles apart."

"Without questioning the merits of the all-out search for Fr. Bossi, practically nothing was done for Fr. Madhu," Cruz told the INQUIRER by phone when sought for comment.

Bossi, a 57-year-old member of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, was abducted by armed men on June 10 while on his way to say Sunday Mass in a remote village in Zamboanga Sibugay.

ACTRESS DESIREE DEL VALLE plays every young boy's fantasy in the independent film, "Tuli," which captured the grand jury award for international narrative feature in Outfest in California. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'Tuli' wins grand jury award in LA gay film festival

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

"TULI" (CIRCUMCISION), A FILM BY INternationally acclaimed Filipino director Auraeus Solito, won the grand jury award for international narrative feature Sunday evening in Outfest, one of the world's largest gay and lesbian film festivals and the largest film festival in Southern California.

"I'm so happy!" Solito wrote via e-mail, recalling that he received an e-mail alert about the award shortly after the awards night gala which was held at the Ford Amphitheatre in Los Angeles.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, Outfest featured more than 200 films and videos from 26 countries. Outfest is the leading festival of its kind in the US and is the oldest running film festival in Los Angeles.

"Tuli," Solito's follow-up to his internationally recognized "Ang Pagdadalaga ni (The Blossoming of) Maximo Oliveros," was featured in Sundance film festival's Spectrum program in January.

"This is a victory for indie filmmaking in the Philippines," said Solito.

"Tuli," which links the summer ritual of circumcision among young boys and other traditions in the Philippines to a love story with a twist, stars Desiree del Valle, Carlo Aquino, Vanna Garcia, Bembol Roco, Amable Quiambao and Eugene Domingo.

Written by Jimmy Flores, the film shared the Netpac Award at this year's Berlin film festival.

After "Tuli," Solito made "Pisay," his entry in the ongoing Cinemalaya festival. A nostalgic look at his student days at the Philippine Science High School, fondly referred to by its alumni as Pisay, the film and Solito received a standing ovation at its recent premiere.

Comelec extends voter list-up

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMelec) yesterday announced the extension of voter registration for the synchronized barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections on Oct. 29.

In a press statement, the poll body said the registration for the barangay elections will be extended starting today up to July 31 at various Comelec offices.

Registration for the SK elections, on the other hand, will be accepted on July 28 and 29, and on Aug. 4 and 5, both weekends, at all barangay halls.

The regular registration period ended last Sunday.

James Jimenez, Comelec spokesperson, said the registration extension aimed to accommodate the young people aged 15 to 18 who want to participate in the SK elections.

"The great number of applicants over the past week indicates that many people wish to exercise their right of suffrage," Jimenez said in a statement.

Jose Concepcion Jr., former chair of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and currently chair of Barangay Forbes Park in Makati City, had appealed twice to the Comelec to extend the registration for the barangay elections, citing the sheer number of people who want to vote on Oct. 29.

The Comelec's decision yesterday was a turnaround from an earlier pronouncement of Chairman Benjamin Abalos that only the registration for the SK elections would be extended.

Abalos had said he had ordered an investigation into the high turnout of registrants for the barangay elections the past weeks. The Comelec did not expect the high turnout considering that a registration was held last year for last May's midterm elections.

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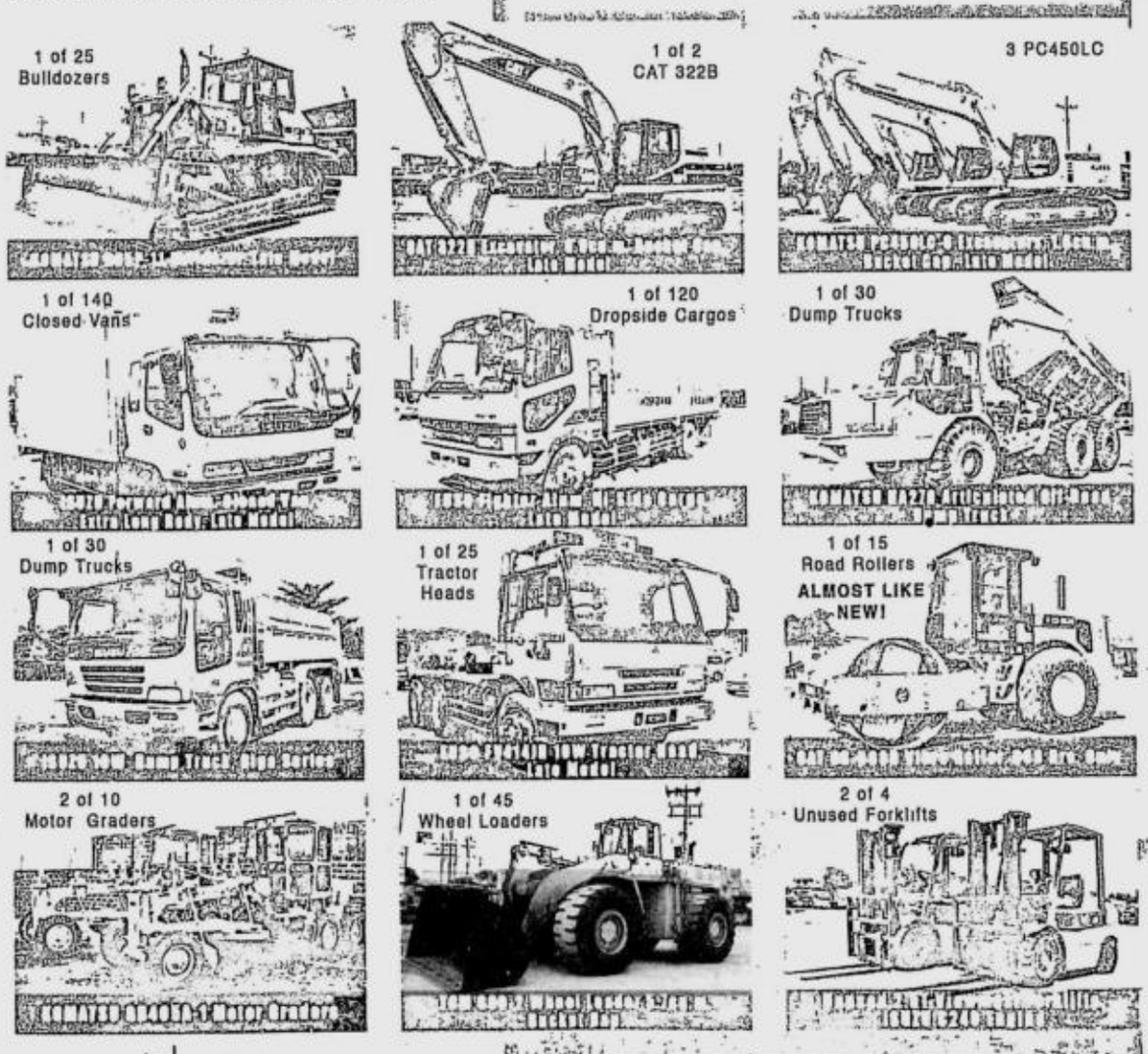

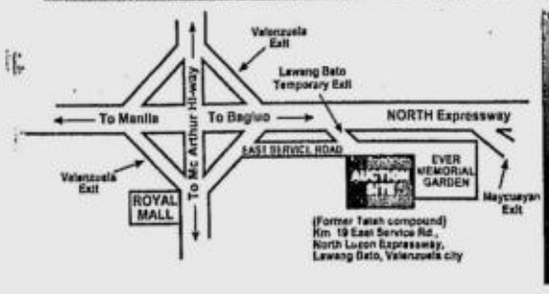

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Asean meet delegates pouring in

DELEGATES FROM AROUND ASIA have started arriving in Manila for the four-day Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Ministerial Meeting (AMM) which starts on July 29 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Organizers expect some 750 dignitaries to attend the AMM where foreign ministers and officials from partner nations will tackle regional defense and security issues, as well as the drafting of the Asean charter.

Besides Asean member states Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, participating are dialogue partners Australia, Canada, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States, and guest countries such as Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste, North Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Preparatory meetings have been set prior to the ministerial meeting, including discussions of the High Level Task Force (HLTF) for the drafting of the Asean charter created in January during the Asean summit in Cebu.

"The proposed charter will provide for the legal institutional framework to support the realization of Asean goals and objectives," said the AMM's Philippine organizing committee in a statement.

The charter is envisioned to "codify all Asean norms, rules and values, reaffirm principles, goals and ideals contained in Asean's milestone agreements, confer a legal personality on Asean and determine the functions and develop areas of competence of key Asean bodies and their relationship with one another in the overall Asean structure." *Tarra Quismundo*

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Corrections

IN THE JULY 23 ISSUE, Conrado de Quiros' "There's the Rub" column on Page A14—"State of the nation"—misstated the name of the highest award accorded to a Filipino soldier by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The highest award given out by the AFP is the Medal of Valor—not the Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is given out by the US Congress.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, the blurb for the concert of tenor Sal Maláki on Page C3 of the Lifestyle section misstated the date of the concert. The concert is scheduled on Friday, July 27—not July 28—at the Meralco Theater.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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NOTICE OF THE REGULAR STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING
EASYCALL COMMUNICATIONS PHILIPPINES, INC.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the regular annual stockholders' meeting of **EASYCALL COMMUNICATIONS PHILIPPINES, INC.,** shall be held on 25 July 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at The Lighthouse Theatre, A.C. Delgado & Railroad corner 23rd & 24th Streets, Port Area, Manila with the following ***REVISED*** agenda:

I. Call to Order.
II. Determination and Certification of a Quorum.
III. Approval of the previous Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on 19 July 2006
IV. Report of the President
- 2006 Highlights
- 2007 Performance

V. Approval of the Audited Financial Statements for the calendar year ended 31 December 2006.
VI. Confirmation and Ratification of Corporate Acts for the year 2006.
VII. Election of the members of the Board of Directors for 2007-2008.
VIII. Appointment of External Auditors - nominated for this year's Ernst & Young-SGV.
IX. Other Matters - Approval, Ratification and Confirmation.
- Offer for the sale of 90% of the company's investment and shareholding in e-Performax Contact Centers, Corp. to GEBSI for Php 70M. This corporate action is subject to dissenter's right of appraisal.
- Approval to the exercise of pre-emptive right of Easycall Communications Philippines, Inc. (ECPI) in order to participate in the capital increase of e-Performax Contact Centers, Corp.
- Approval for the increase in subscribed and paid-up capital from Php 91,925,975 to Php 103,429,975 to be effected by way of stock rights offer, whereby each shareholder shall be given the right to acquire 1 share for every 8 shares he currently holds.
- Proposed offer of PCG Philippines, Inc. (PCGPH to be renamed e-Performax International, Inc.) to swap the outstanding shares of ECPI in e-Performax Contact Centers, Corp. in exchange for equivalent shares in PCGPH.

X. Adjournment.

Only stockholders of record at the close of business hour of 31 May 2007 the record date and time fixed by the Board of Directors, are entitled to notice of and to vote at said meeting.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hunger rate down nationwide but up in metro, survey finds

AFTER BEING AT "CRISIS LEVEL" at 19 percent the last two consecutive survey rounds, the national percentage of families experiencing involuntary hunger in the past three months "declined significantly" to 14.7 percent, a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations found.

The plunge in the national percentage was due to large drops in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, but hunger reached a new record-high of 22 percent in Metro Manila, the SWS said in a report released yesterday.

The national proportion is still equivalent to about 2.6 million households who had experienced hunger, defined as involuntary "if undergone without the option of having something to eat."

And while SWS recognized this as a "substantial improvement," it was still above the 11.6-percent average in SWS surveys from mid-1998 to the present.

Hunger went up from 20.7 percent in February to 22 percent in June in the National Capital Region—even higher than the previous high of 21 percent recorded in December 2005.

"Hunger rose in Metro Manila because the two-point increase in moderate hunger outweighed the 0.7 decrease in severe hunger," SWS said.

Moderate hunger was defined in the survey as hunger experienced "only once or a few times," while severe hunger was defined as hunger experienced "often or always."

Hunger declined six percentage points in the rest of Luzon (from 18.3 percent to 12 percent); five percentage points in Mindanao (from 22.7 percent to 17.7 percent), and three percentage points in the Visayas (from 15.3 percent to 12.3 percent).

Across areas, moderate hunger fell from 15 percent in February to 12.5 percent in June, while severe hunger fell by almost half—from 4 percent to 2.2 percent.

SWS noted that severe hunger in Mindanao fell from 4.7 percent in February to 0.7 percent in June—a record low first set in 1999.

The results were part of the Second Quarter Social Weather Report conducted from June 27 to June 30, and used face-to-face interviews with a national sample of 1,200 statistically representative household heads of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus-minus 3 percentage points. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Energy official finds quitting hard

By Abigail L. Ho

FOLLOWING MALACAÑANG'S ACceptance of Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla's resignation, Energy Undersecretary Melinda Ocampo has also asked to be relieved of her post.

"She wants out—sympathetic to what happened [to Lotilla]. President Macapagal-Arroyo doesn't want a backlash so they're trying to keep her from resigning," a person familiar with the issue said.

The source who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak, said Ms Arroyo had asked Presidential Management Staff head Cerge Remonde to convince Ocampo not to resign.

Reached for comment, Ocampo would neither confirm nor deny the allegation.

"I will inform you of my decision at the appropriate time," she said in a text message.

Ocampo was appointed undersecretary at the Department of Energy in 2005, shortly after the appointment of Lotilla as secretary. She replaced then Undersecretary Cyril del Callar, now National Power Corp. (Napocor) president.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita last week announced President Arroyo's acceptance of Lotilla's resignation and the appointment of Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes as the new energy czar beginning next month.

This spurred different reactions from energy industry stakeholders as well as militant and consumer groups.

Consumer and Oil Price Watch chair Raul Concepcion said the changing of the guard at the energy department was ill-timed.

"I'd rather [Lotilla] was given until the end of the year to accomplish what needs to be accomplished—the privatization of Napocor and [the National Transmission Corp.], which are scheduled to take place within the year," he said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who chaired the Senate energy committee in the 13th Congress, was more emphatic in her position that the new appointment was not only ill-timed but totally wrong.

She threatened to use her veto power in the Commission on Appointments to block Reyes' appointment to the energy department.

Rules on liquids in carry-on luggage out

AIRPORT OFFICIALS HAVE BEgun distributing flyers informing travelers that regulated amounts of liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) would be allowed in carry-on luggage beginning next month in compliance with the security standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (Icao).

Pamphlets about the new regulation have been placed in strategic areas at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminals 1 and 2 and the Manila Domestic Airport, airport security chief retired Gen. Angel Atutubo said yesterday.

Atutubo said pamphlets were also given to hotels and travel agencies for distribution to clients.

The Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa), the Office for Transportation Security and the Philippine National Police Aviation Security Group had agreed to lift the total ban on LAGs in carry-on luggage, a regulation enforced because of a terror threat in Britain last year but later revised by the Icao after a review of the global security situation.

Following the new worldwide standard in security screening, aviation security agencies will relax the ban on Aug. 1, allowing 100 ml or less of LAGs in carry-on bags. It has been a year since the ban began requiring passengers to check in all LAGs in any amount.

Miaa's primer suggests passengers put the allowed amount of LAGs in 100-ml containers, and place them in resealable plastic bags measuring 20 cm by 20 cm. *Tarra Quismundo*

A PUBLIC SERVICE
By the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), and the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

NOTICE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC

Starting on July 25, 2007, Compulsory Third Party Liability – Certificate of Coverage (CTPL-COC) issued by insurance providers will be verified through the Certificate of Coverage Verification Facility (COCVF) of the LTO IT System. Be advised that only CTPL-COC policies from insurance providers that are accredited by the Insurance Commission and connected to the LTO IT System will be accepted.

A PUBLIC SERVICE
By the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) and the Land Transportation Office (LTO)

NOTICE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC

PROCEDURES FOR MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION AND SECURING CERTIFICATE OF COVER FORCOMPULSORY THIRD PARTY LIABILITY (CTPL-COC)

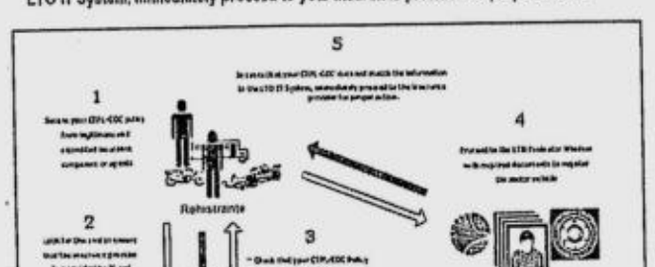
In compliance with LTO Memorandum Circular Number RIB-2007-854
All LTO District Offices will ONLY ACCEPT registration of Motor Vehicles with valid CTPL-COC verified through the LTO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) SYSTEM.

Effective July 2005, 2007, ONLY Compulsory Third Party Liability Certificate of Cover (CTPL-COC) verified through the LTO IT System WILL BE ACCEPTED for LTO motor vehicle registration.

Step-by-step procedure for securing valid CTPL-COC:
1. Secure your CTPL-COC policy only from legitimate insurance companies or agents duly accredited by the Insurance Commission (IC).
2. To ensure that your insurance provider is duly accredited by the Insurance Commission and has an online and real time connection to the LTO IT system, look for this seal:

IS CONNECTED
REAL TIME, ONLINE.

3. Ensure that your CTPL-COC has an assigned Confirmation Code that could be found on your insurance policy to confirm its upload to the LTO IT System.
4. Proceed to the LTO District Office and present the required documents including the CTPL-COC to the LTO Evaluator window to register the motor vehicle.
5. In cases wherein your CTPL-COC does not match your vehicle information according to the LTO IT System, immediately proceed to your insurance provider for proper action.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City
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LTO RECEIVED

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR RIB-2007-854

TO : All Regional and Assistant Regional Directors, Heads of District/Extension Offices, Head – LTO IT Project Management Committee.

SUBJECT : Online and Real-Time Registration and Authentication of Certificates of Cover for Compulsory Third Party Liability Insurance

DATE : 16 July 2007

In line with Department Order No. 2007-28 dated 5 July 2007 of the Department of Transportation and Communications, prescribing the rules and regulations of the integration of the issuance and payment of CTPL Insurance with the LTO IT Project's System and Databases, and pending implementation thereof, during the transition period mentioned therein, there is a need to implement an interim verification system, specifically the COCVF

In view thereof, all LTO officials and employees and other concerned parties are hereby directed to comply with the following:

1. Effective 25 July 2007, only COCs for CTPL that are verified and authenticated online and real-time under the COCVF System shall be accepted,

2. Stradcom shall, as the project proponent of the LTO IT Project, conduct orientation meetings and trainings on the COCVF to all concerned LTO officials and employees;

This Memorandum Circular shall remain effective until: (a) the expiration of the ninety (90) days transition period stipulated in the DOTC Department Order No. 2007-28; or (b) the actual implementation of the Integrated CTPL Insurance Program.

For strict compliance

REYNALDO L. BERROYA
Assistant Secretary

CERTIFIED COPY
JOSSIE M. BORJA
Records Officer III

MOTHER KNOWS BEST
Tessa Prieto-Valdes (4th from left), INQUIRER columnist, businesswoman and interior designer, is the first "Idol sa Breast-Feeding" of the Department of Health for showing that a woman can breast-feed and juggle a busy work and social schedule at the same time. Valdes is shown with daughter Athena and, from left, INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto, Howard Sobel and Alex Iellamo of the World Health Organization, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and INQUIRER president and CEO Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez with son Nico during the award rites. National Breast-feeding Week will be celebrated in 180 countries next week. ERIK ARAZAS

'Free speech' gets lawyer fined, cited for contempt

By Leila B. Salaverria

FOR CALLING THE SUPREME Court a "dispenser of injustice" and insinuating that a justice had handed down a ruling for certain considerations, a lawyer was cited by the high tribunal in indirect contempt.

Saying his charges were baseless, the court rejected lawyer Romeo Roxas' explanation that his statements were in the exercise of free speech.

Roxas was fined P30,000 after the high court ruled that a letter he sent to Justice Minita Chico-Nazario was indecent, improper and violated the Code of Professional Responsibility that states that lawyers should give the courts the respect due them.

Properly respectful terms

In sanctioning Roxas, the high court said people were not prevented from lambasting public officials, but the statements in his letter, which was furnished the other justices, overstepped the bounds of free speech.

"This Court does not curtail the right of a lawyer, or any person for that matter, to be critical of courts and judges as long as they are made in properly respectful terms and through legitimate channels," the high tribunal said in its July 12 resolution.

Wrong and unjust decision

In his Sept. 13, 2006, letter to Nazario, Roxas said her decision ordering him and one Santiago Pastor to return more than P17 million to Antonio de Zuzuarregui Jr. was wrong and unjust and questioned the manner by which she handed it down.

"We cannot fathom how such a decision could have been arrived at except through considerations other than the pure merits of the case. Every law student reading through the case can see clearly how a brother-lawyer in the profession has been so shortchanged by, ironically, the most sacred and highest institution in the administration and dispenser of justice," Roxas said in his letter.

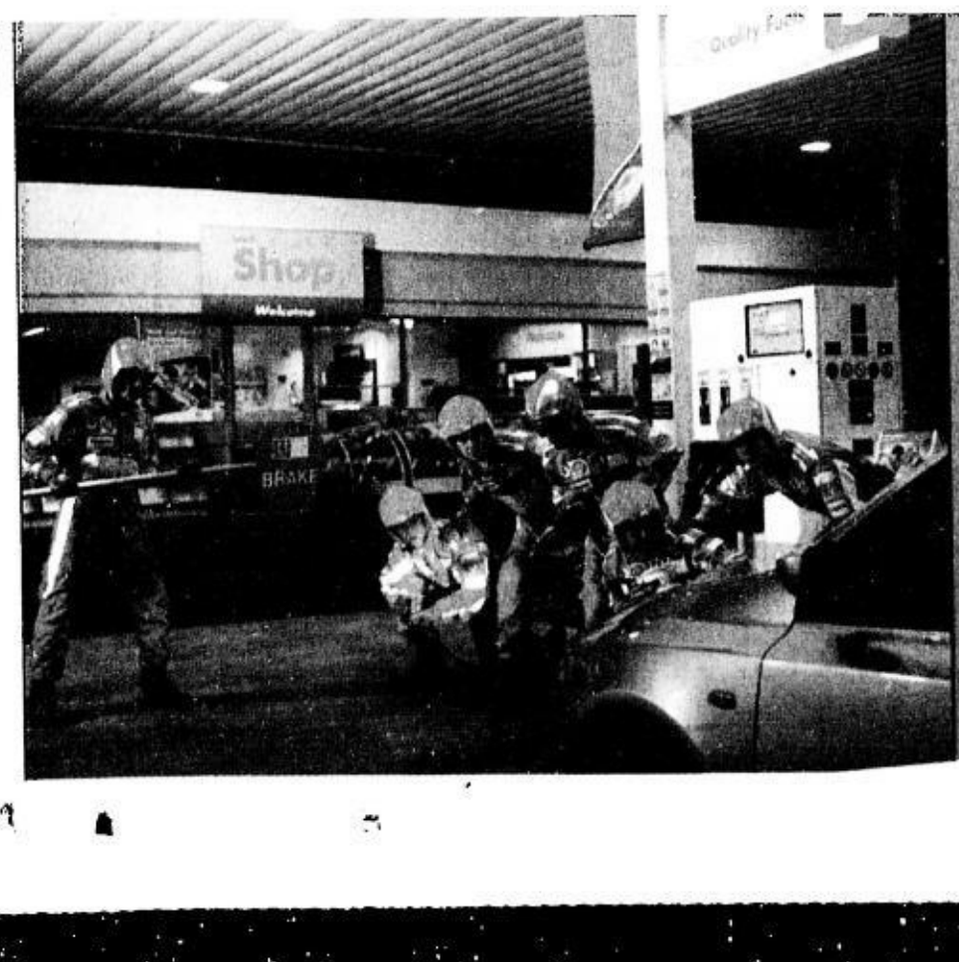
The high court, he said, became "a dispenser of injustice."

In good faith

He also told Nazario to "sleep well if you still can" and that she would be judged by the "Supreme Dispenser of Justice."

Roxas, when asked by the court to explain why he should not be cited for contempt, apologized to Nazario, the other justices and the court itself, and said he did not intend to offend the justices or besmirch the court's reputation. He also said his criticism was made in good faith.

The court stood by Nazario's ruling, saying that just because the decision did not favor Roxas did not mean it "was contrary to law and was not rendered in a fair and impartial manner."



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Made to move

Villar keeps Senate presidency

From page A1

scathing exchanges between the two camps.

Villar said he tried not to be affected by attacks from his fellow opposition members. He said this meant a "vibrant" Senate and was a "good sign."

"A legislative body like the Senate is an effective instrument of check and balance," he said. "But the grandeur of this purpose is lost on some who think that the Senate's role is one of unfailing negative criticism bordering on sheer obstructionism."

He said the Senate should work to promote national economic growth by addressing inefficiency, instability and corruption.

"(There is) the urgent need to rise above political differences and destroy the walls of divisiveness that get in the way of progress. We must seek to collaborate and find workable solutions under the guidance of à shared national vision," Villar added.

Opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who backed Villar, assumed the second highest position of Senate President Pro Tempore unopposed.

Critical collaboration

Estrada echoed Villar's position that the Senate should extend its "critical collaboration" with Malacañang, borrowing a term applied by the late Cardinal Jaime Sin to the Church's relationship with the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"I take this position to assume a position of principled and critical collaboration, but never subservient and docile obedience to Malacañang or to any powerful and vested interest," said Estrada.

He said he voted for Villar for the sake of "continuity."

"But once he is shown to be consorting or conspiring with Malacañang, I will not hesitate to withdraw my support," said the son of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

"I ask those who criticize me unfairly to look beyond the narrowed division of administration and opposition," he added.

Congressional probes

Villar also said the Senate would continue to carry out investigations of anomalies despite Malacanang's refusal to have its officials testify in congressional inquiries.

"We will continue to carry out our investigative duties as part of our power of oversight. Shenanigans in government should never be condoned," he said.

Independent Sen. Francis Pangilinan also retained his position as Senate majority leader.

The new majority bloc is composed of administration Senators Edgardo Angara, Joker Arroyo, Pia Cayetano, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Juan Ponce Enrile, Richard Gordon, Lito Lapid, Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and Juan Miguel Zubiri; independent Sen. Gregorio Honasan and opposition Senators Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero and Estrada.

Those in the minority bloc are Senators Benigno Aquino III, Rodolfo Biazon, Panfilo Lacson, Loren Legarda, Jamby Madrigal, Manuel Roxas II, Antonio Trillanes IV and Pimentel.

In the coming weeks, Villar would negotiate the tricky assignment of committees. Members of the majority bloc usually get to choose first among the 36 standing committees.

Estrada, Cayetano and Escudero yesterday insisted they had prior agreement with Villar that the powerful blue ribbon committee that investigates public accountability should go to an opposition member.

Cayetano for the first time expressed interest in being chair of either the blue ribbon or the education committee.

Lacson has also expressed interest in the blue ribbon committee which was previously chaired by Arroyo, who has been criticized by the opposition for not fully investigating the Jose Pidal secret bank accounts controversy involving First Gentleman Juan Miguel Arroyo.

Estrada has said he would withdraw from Villar if Arroyo retains the blue ribbon committee.

Villar, who has stayed abroad the past couple of weeks during the word war within the opposition, was suddenly noncommittal yesterday about the committee assignments.

Status quo

Administration senators reportedly expect a "status quo" in their committee assignments.

"Maybe it's better that everyone does not have any committee yet so we can have fresh discussions, to be fair with everybody," Villar said.

After the nominal voting for the Senate President, Estrada took the opening salvo when he took the floor to explain his vote and lambaste Lacson who has likened him, Villar, Cayetano and Escudero to "political mongrels."

"There is no room for animosities and sarcasm with such uncalled for language and labels ... in the arena of statesmanship. These are plain gutter talk that should remain in the gutter," said Estrada.

He alluded to Lacson's decision to run against Fernando Poe Jr. and President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election. "Because we were not united, because we cannot restrain personal ambitions, Mrs. Arroyo was able again to steal the (2004) elections," Estrada said.

Lacson countered that he was simply glad that the "political conundrum of the past weeks has been solved and clarified" with the division of the body.

While he congratulated Villar, he said he voted for Pimentel out of "gratitude" to those who voted for seven senators from the GO ticket, out of the total 12 winners.

Escudero quickly took his turn, saying no one had the right to judge who is really with the opposition and who is not.

"I ran under the opposition, I will remain in the opposition and no once can claim the title and the right to judge who is the opposition and who is not," he retorted.

Worst salvo

But Madrigal fired the worst salvo, attacking Villar's capability as a leader.

"I believe that Senator Pimentel is the right statesman for the Senate presidency. We need statesmen and not businessmen to run this country. Statesmen are willing to be jailed for principle; businessmen are not made of the same mettle," said Madrigal, a scion of an old rich family.

She also lashed out at her opposition colleagues for collaborating with administration senators.

To dispel further animosity, Pimentel assured Villar that he deserved the support of the "solid minority."

Sen. Trillanes: Inside looking for way out

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

UNABLE TO ATTEND YESTERday's opening of this year's session of Congress, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV had to content himself with watching the proceedings on TV from his Marine detention center.

"The Arroyo government has deprived the over 11 million Filipinos who voted for me to represent them in the Senate of their right to be represented," he later said in a statement.

"Every day that I am not allowed to be physically present in the Senate to do my duty is effectively a day stripped off the Filipinos' right to be represented in the country's highest legislative body and a day extending the tyranny of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," he added.

Trillanes spent the day meeting with his staff to discuss bills to be filed and issues that need to be studied.

The former Navy lieutenant detained in connection with the Oakwood mutiny of 2003 watched on TV Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. marshal support for the resolution calling for bail to allow him to attend future Senate sessions. He also listened to the nationally televised State of the Nation Address of Ms Arroyo.

Although he blamed the Arroyo administration for his absence from yesterday's legislative events, it was mainly the Makati court's failure to act on his request that prevented him from attending the session.

Trillanes said he was not asking for any special privilege or preferential treatment from the court, stressing that he only seeks an arrangement that would allow him to work while under detention.

Eighteen senators signed Pimentel's resolution.

Pimentel said that with the Senate's expression of "overwhelming support," he was confident the Makati Regional Trial Court and the Armed Forces of the Philippines would allow Trillanes to participate in proceedings in the upper chamber.

JDV elected to 5th term as House Speaker

From page A1

who campaigned for Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia for Speaker, told reporters while lawmakers were holding a roll-call vote to elect the Speaker.

The 81-year-old Garcia, groomed by a faction of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) headed by Villafuerte to challenge De Venecia, was never nominated.

"Why didn't they (Garcia's supporters) nominate him?" Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin asked. "At least Julius Caesar was invited inside the forum before they stabbed him. He (Garcia) was stabbed on the way to the bathroom by his own allies. It was really weird."

Villafuerte said it was Garcia who said he did not want to be nominated anymore.

"He advised me that he didn't want to participate anymore in this procedure, which is a total sham," he said. "We are not recognizing it. We are not participating."

Villafuerte predicted a turbulent 14th Congress, citing the "arrogant" manner De Venecia was elected. De Venecia mustered a total of 159 votes.

De Venecia's road to a fifth term was anything but a breeze.

Up to the plenary

Until a few hours before the House opened its session, he was conducting last-minute discussions with fellow congressmen apparently to ascertain his victory on the floor.

With matters still unresolved, the fates of De Venecia and Garcia inevitably went to the plenary. In the past, the choice for speaker was decided in informal discussions, with the actual election being only a formality.

Garcia's allies said yesterday's proceedings were mere "preliminary skirmishes."

"We will push through with our recommended reforms. If he (De Venecia) will ignore them, there will be more problems for him," Villafuerte told the INQUIRER.

Call for reforms

Villafuerte said many members of the majority coalition would call for a Garcia speakership if De Venecia shunned reforms on improved attendance, greater staff support and funding, and equity in the distribution of committee chairmanships.

Villafuerte questioned the number of those who actually voted for De Venecia.

"Many of those whose votes were counted might deny that they did because they either abstained or just kept quiet," he added.

De Venecia's opponents opened the session by promptly questioning the authority of secretary general Roberto Nazareno to act as presiding officer.

The debates dragged on for more than four hours, threatening to delay—if not postpone—the President's Sona scheduled for 4 p.m.

Process railroaded

The minority bloc was particularly incensed after Mandaluyong Rep. Neptali Gonzales II motioned to elect De Venecia as speaker.

"It's still morning but you're already railroading the process," Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said.

The issue of Nazareno's legitimacy to preside was "settled" in a disputed vote, with 160 lawmakers backing his right to be presiding officer against 40 others who were opposed.

Locsin said the decision not to field Garcia was meant to avoid having an administration lawmaker serve as minority leader.

Under the rules, the contender with the second highest number of votes automatically becomes leader of the minority.

Offer of reconciliation

In his acceptance speech, De Venecia extended the hand of reconciliation to Garcia and Villafuerte.

He praised Garcia as one of the most brilliant men in the 14th Congress and Villafuerte as his "other good friend."

"There were whirlwind challenges and debate during the past few weeks as we contemplated the leadership that our House needs at this time," De Venecia said.

"That process was unprecedented in its ferocity.... Now I extend a hand of reconciliation and friendship to those who were, only momentarily, my rivals," he added.

De Venecia also said: "This will be the hardest working House of all time. I commit to exercise fair and decisive leadership over the next three years."

A De Venecia ally, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, said the Speaker would be unhampered in pushing for reforms to alleviate poverty, including passage of the cheaper medicine bill.

The opposition manifested that the minority bloc was choosing San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora as its leader.

More than infra, GMA must turn over new leaf

From page A1

back as a nation and as a dynamic economy do not have to do with infrastructure, or social services, or even peace in Mindanao, but with persistent policies that favor a few over the many, and with officials appointed to key positions not for their known competence, but for their political subservience.

Like last year's Sona, the bulk of the speech was a virtual travelogue around the country, with a long litany of infrastructure projects cherry-picked from the Medium Term Public Investment Program (MTPIP) accompanying the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP).

A report released by Malacañang to accompany the speech declared that "infrastructure development will be the principal legacy of the President."

The speech itself seemed to affirm this.

Infrastructure, indeed, has been a glaring inadequacy of this country all these past years, and Ms Arroyo clearly wants to be remembered for helping fill this gap.

The common reaction has again tended to be on whether funds are available to do all of the projects. While the President did indicate where the money would come from, one can only hope that she and her economic managers have done the arithmetic right.

The infrastructure development program is critical to our economic future in many ways. Perhaps not known to many, the greatest threat to our economic future at this time is our glaringly low rates of investment, both domestic and foreign, in comparison to our Asean neighbors.

The situation is so alarming that the World Bank, credit rating agencies, and other foreign observers have sounded the alarm loud and clear. Data clearly show that our closest neighbors invest around 25 percent of their GDP; we currently invest less than 15 percent.

Worse, this gap promises to widen further in the near future. Since 2002, our investment expenditures grew at an annual average rate of less than 1 percent; our neighbors have seen annual investment growth rates ranging from 3 percent (Malaysia) to 20 percent (Cambodia).

Filling our infrastructure gap should help change this.

The real challenge

Actually, there is hardly anything novel about the impressive array of pipelined infrastructure projects named in the Sona. We have always had MTPIPs that have been well thought out ever since the government started preparing MTPDPs. The President has simply chosen to focus her Sona on infrastructure, which is a good way to make the speech more concrete, perhaps at the risk of being boring—all the solicited applause notwithstanding.

There is benefit to highlighting these infrastructure projects in the speech, however, as it calls wide attention to the promised facilities, thereby inviting direct monitoring by the public.

Impressive as the list may sound, our challenge had always been in the actual implementation of such infrastructure projects.

A number of the projects named had in fact been in the MTPIP for more than 10 years. Some never got off the ground for lack of financing. Some have been delayed by legal and operational problems far beyond their original target completion dates, with eventual costs running several times the original budget.

Beyond infrastructure

Still other projects have been "completed" on paper several times over, having become a bottomless money sink for their annual budget allocations. With all of us made aware what and where these projects are, thanks to the Sona, it now becomes incumbent on us, the citizens, to hold our officials accountable for their faithful and prompt implementation.

Still, the future of this country hinges on much more beyond its infrastructure. Beyond infrastructure, Ms Arroyo did say the right things in her Sona. Which is not to say, however, that she said enough.

We do need to ramp up basic social services and secure a lasting peace in Mindanao, the two other priorities she highlighted for the remainder of her term.

In particular, we need to invest far more in our people and reverse the continuous decline since 1997 in the proportion of the national budget going to health and education.

Notwithstanding the impressive statistics on classrooms and scholarships, the statistics on health and education outcomes are what ultimately matter.

And here, the news has not been as bright: Recent data indicate rising drop-out rates from elementary school and falling enrollment rates, as well as worsening nutrition indicators in many parts of the country.

Ms Arroyo identified some key pieces of legislation that would be useful and important, including those that would promote cheaper medicines, electoral reform, stronger witness protection, special courts and so on.

But what she failed to mention, and equally important and of long-term significance, are bills that have been languishing in Congress for many years, including the bill on freedom of access to information, and a number of key economic bills that failed to make the homerun in the 13th Congress.

Sona? Erap prefers the sauna

From page A1

Having "better things" to do, Estrada said he could not watch Ms Arroyo make a litany of promises, which, he said he had heard in her previous Sonas.

"Why waste my time? She won't say anything new," the 70-year-old Estrada told the INQUIRER on the phone, a few hours before Ms Arroyo delivered her one-hour speech at the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City.

By the time Estrada was through with his activities, Ms Arroyo's speech had long been over.

"There's no need for me to listen to that again. I've heard it before and [even the majority of the people] would agree," he said.

The former President also did not bother to give his own Sona yesterday, unlike in the previous year.

"My son has already delivered a message (this morning). I think that's enough," he said.

Sandiganbayan ruling

He was referring to Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, whose loyalty was being questioned by other opposition senators for allegedly aligning himself with the administration coalition that elected Manuel Villar Senate President.

Coming to the defense of his son, Estrada denied a move to consort with the administration in order to avoid a guilty verdict in his 6-year-old plunder case tried by the Sandiganbayan.

The antigraft court is set to hand down its verdict not later than Sept. 15.

Estrada reiterated that the Arroyo administration had twice offered him the option of exile in exchange for the dropping of charges against him, but he preferred to stay and languish in detention for almost six years.

"And yet they they get that idea that I'm trying to negotiate for my freedom. No way! I can even rot in Muntinlupa and I will never negotiate with the administration," he said.

Support for Villar

Estrada explained that his son's action was in support of Villar, who ran and won under the opposition slate.

However, should allegations be proven true that Villar was making arrangements with the administration the young Estrada would immediately withdraw his support.

Estrada, nevertheless, was confident that Villar and his son would be the last ones to associate with the Arroyo administration.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal had sent Estrada a letter blaming him for consenting to his son joining Genuine Opposition Senators Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero and Villar in the majority bloc formed with nine administration senators.

With the move, the opposition has lost the opportunity of becoming the majority party in the Senate, Madrigal pointed out.

"I was the one who formed the opposition. I had a hard time forming and making them win. I went out of my way and now they are blaming my son. These people didn't even contribute anything to the opposition," Estrada said.

He added that all this talk was being concocted by those who have their eyes set on the presidency in 2010.

"There are some opposition senators who are eyeing [the seat] for 2010. They want to bring down Villar who is [a presidential aspirant]," he said.

"Why bring him down? He is also a fellow oppositionist and we cannot blame him for securing his position as Senate President," Estrada said.

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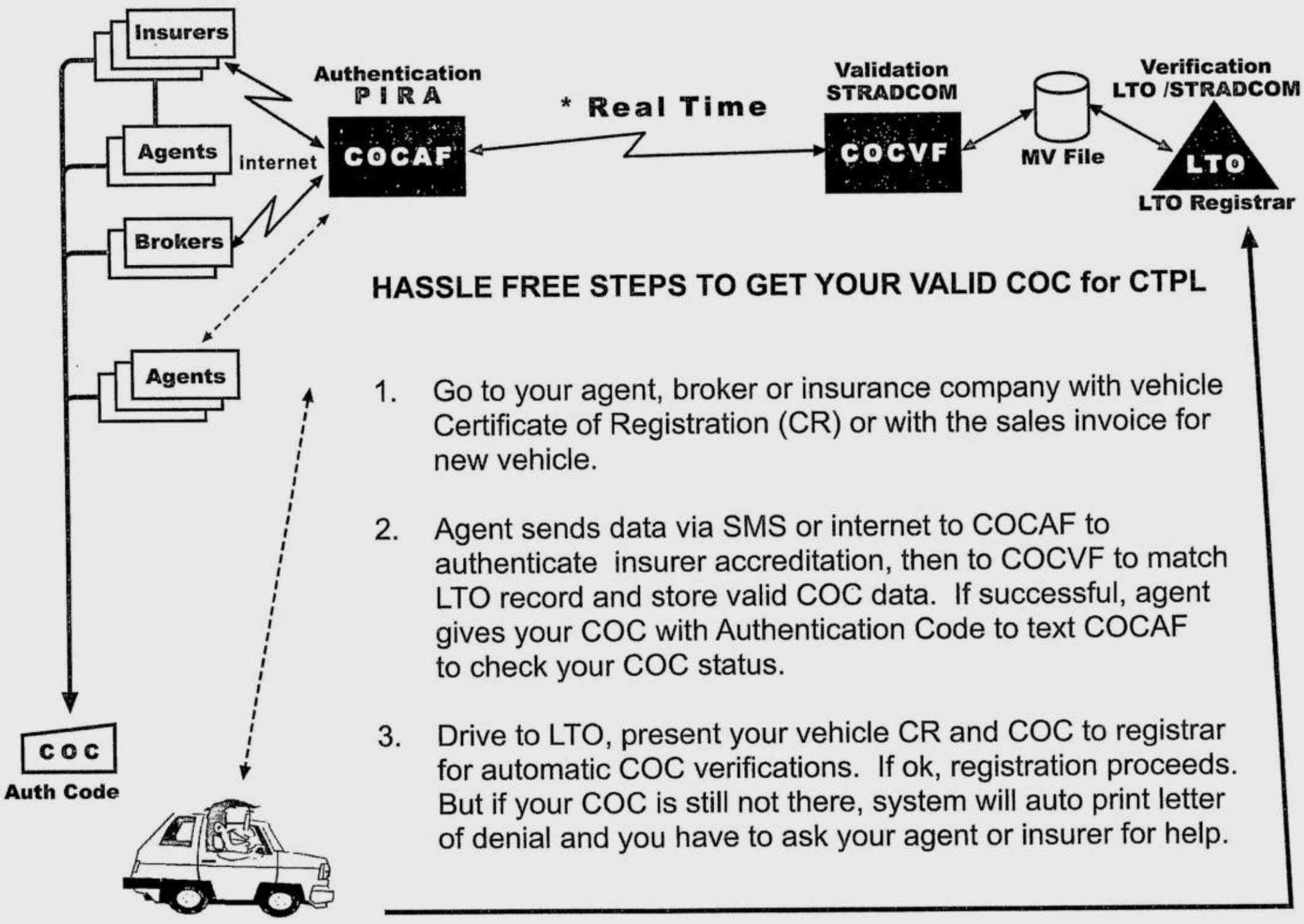
NOTICE TO VEHICLE OWNERS AND THE PUBLIC

Starting July 25, 2007, all Certificates Of Cover (COCs) for Compulsory Third Party Liability (CTPL) insurance issued by insurance companies through licensed agents and brokers will be electronically processed, via the internet or text messaging, at the PIRA COC Authentication Facility. All COCs will be checked if they were issued by insurance companies accredited with the Insurance Commission, and will be validated in real-time against the LTO's Motor Vehicle file database. After this, all COCs will be verified online during the registration process by the COC Verification Facility of the LTO. Only valid COCs from insurers accredited by the Insurance Commission and with matched data to the LTO Motor Vehicle file database will be accepted by the LTO. This is an interconnected online CTPL system to assure motorists that the CTPL COCs they are buying are valid – for the ultimate protection and assistance to the public in vehicular accidents.



1. Go to your agent, broker or insurance company with vehicle Certificate of Registration (CR) or with the sales invoice for new vehicle.

2. Agent sends data via SMS or internet to COCAF to authenticate insurer accreditation, then to COCVF to match LTO record and store valid COC data. If successful, agent gives your COC with Authentication Code to text COCAF to check your COC status.

3. Drive to LTO, present your vehicle CR and COC to registrar for automatic COC verifications. If ok, registration proceeds. But if your COC is still not there, system will auto print letter of denial and you have to ask your agent or insurer for help.

* LTO offline branches will use SMS Verification via COCAF

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Dengue epidemic in Asia seen

Only RP bucking outbreak trend with fewer deaths

FROM RICH AND SQUEAKY-CLEAN Singapore to impoverished Cambodia, public health officials are warning of a possible epidemic of dengue fever in Asia this year.

The World Health Organization believes 2007 could be on a par with 1998, when nearly 1,500 people died in Asia of the mosquito-borne disease.

One country bucking the regional trend is the Philippines, where deaths in the first half of the year are down from 139 last year to 81 this year.

But officials warn that dengue fever can spread quickly.

According to the WHO, only a handful of countries had experienced epidemics before 1970. But now the disease is endemic in more than 100 countries around the world.

"It has been a neglected disease relative to malaria, tuberculosis and now HIV/AIDS, all of which are major causes of fatalities worldwide," Ehrenberg said.

One of the worst

This year, dengue has already killed more than 1,000 people in Indonesia alone. In many other places, the death and infection rates through June have surpassed the totals for 2006.

"There is a strong possibility this year could be one of the worst," said John Ehrenberg, advisor for malaria and other diseases at the WHO regional office in Manila.

"We are seeing major spikes in reported cases around the region," he told AFP.

Dengue fever is nowhere near as deadly as malaria, which kills an estimated 2.7 million people around the world every year.

But there is no known cure or vaccine to fight dengue fever, which is transmitted by a bite of the white-spotted mosquito known as Aedes aegypti.

Most of those killed tend to be children and old people who have a weak resistance to the virus, and die as a result of internal bleeding.

Officials say the best way to fight the spread of dengue is to control the mosquito's breeding grounds—areas where water collects and stagnates—but that can prove difficult once the annual rains begin.

Rainy season

The early arrival of the rainy season in much of Asia has been blamed for the upsurge in outbreaks this year, experts said.

Throughout Asia, cases of the disease are soaring. Thailand has recorded 19,000 cases and 18 deaths in the first six months of the year.

"This year is more serious than last year because of the earlier arrival of the rainy season, which brought forward the hatching period," Vichai Stimai, of Thailand's health ministry, told Bangkok's Nation newspaper.

In Cambodia, deaths this year have already eclipsed fatalities in 2006 as the country battles one of the worst outbreaks of the disease in a decade.

Some 182 deaths have been recorded for the six months of the year out of nearly 15,000 cases, said Ngan Chantha, director of the health ministry's dengue program. Last year 152 deaths were reported.

Vietnam has reported almost 20,000 cases with 21 deaths, seven more than in the same period last year, the health ministry said.

Than Winn, a senior Burma (Myanmar) health ministry official, told the Myanmar Times newspaper the number of cases in his country was also rising dramatically.

3,000 cases in 6 mos.

"In the first six months of this year there have been about 3,000 cases of the disease and 30 deaths. This is much higher than the first six months of 2006," Winn said.

While poorer countries with less developed public health systems are prone to dengue outbreaks, rich countries like Singapore are not immune.

Dengue has become a major health issue in Singapore and the government has stepped up its public awareness campaign and efforts to eradicate mosquito breeding grounds.

There have been nearly 3,600 cases of dengue infection reported so far this year in the city-state—more than double the number in the period in 2006.

"This was a disease we used to associate with overcrowding in major urban centers," the WHO's Ehrenberg said. "But today it is even finding its way into remote rural areas as well."

In Malaysia, the health ministry's director of disease control, Hasan Abdul Rahman, said 44 people had died in the first four months of 2007 from 16,214 cases reported, compared to 21 deaths and 10,244 cases in the same period last year.

"We are concerned over the increase and we need everyone to cooperate with the authorities to fight the menace," Hasan said.

AFP

Women's group sets fete

THE All NATIONS Women's Group will celebrate its 60th anniversary on Thursday with Venezuelan Ambassador Manuel Perez Iturbe as guest of honor and keynote speaker. He will be introduced by ANWG president Cristina Caedo, overall chair of the anniversary rites.

The theme of the affair is "Expanding the Empowerment of Women in the Global Community."

The event will be held at 1:30 p.m. at Makati Sports Club in Salcedo Village.

During the affair, the ANWG will also pay tribute to its past presidents, among them, Lily Basa, Jeanette Smith, Aurora Udarbe Gonzales, Dr. Martha Taylor, Villa Granada de Guia, Leonida Ortiz, Lolita Mirpuri and Mercedes Posadas.

Co-chairs of the celebration are Vicky Montilla and Lolita Mirpuri.

The new officers and members of ANWG will be inducted by Ambassador Perez Iturbe assisted by Villa Granada de Guia, chair of the membership committee.

Musical numbers, folk dances and a surprise dance number will be performed by the directors. Special guests are the ambassadors' ladies.

The ANWG is committed to promoting cultural and friendly ties with women around the world regardless of religion, social status and education, and to helping the less-privileged through involvement in public service.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, July 24, 2007
16th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Ex 14:21-15:1
Gospel: Matthew 12:46-50

While Jesus was still talking to the people, his mother and his brothers wanted to speak to him and they waited outside. So someone said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are just outside; they want to speak with you."

Jesus answered, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Then he pointed to his disciples and said, "Look! Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is for me brother, sister, or mother."

Commentary

The sea divides with the force of a mighty wind and the people pass through. The Egyptians follow and the glance of God casts the waters back into its course. Israel is saved and the obstinacy of the Egyptians proved to be their destruction. The people sing the glory of God, in awe and praise. Are we obstinate? Are we fearful like the people? Or do we stand in the face of danger/violence/war and proclaim the power and presence of God with his people and cry out to others not to be afraid but to see how God works in all things?

The new people of God is not based on blood ties, marriage, or nationality. The new community of the Word of the Lord that obeys the Father is born of Jesus' life/death and resurrection in the Spirit. We pass over/through the waters and know the awe and mystery of being born in water and Spirit. We are born to be mother, brother, sister to Jesus and each other—closer than any ancient bonding.

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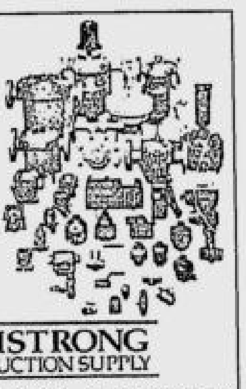
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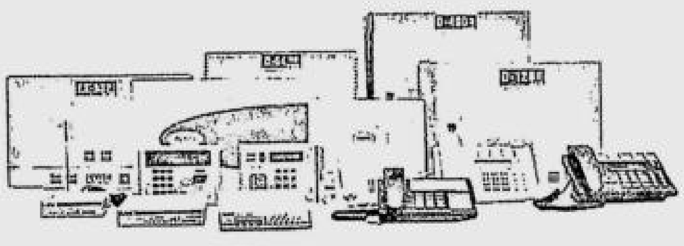
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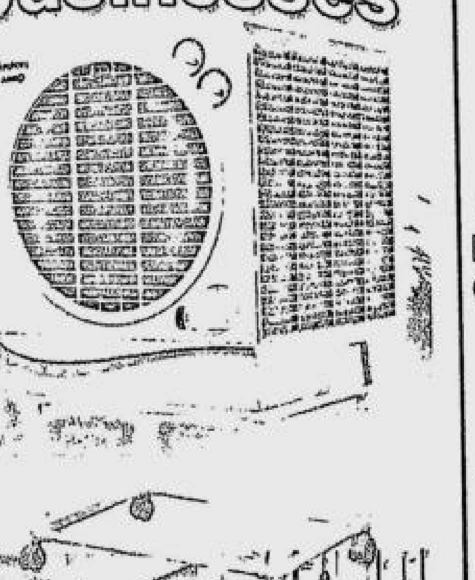
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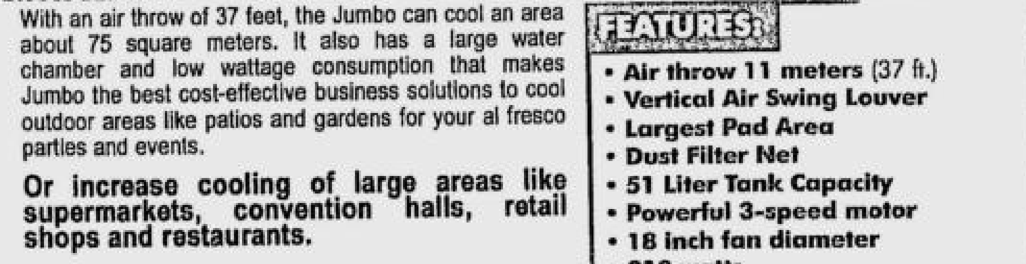
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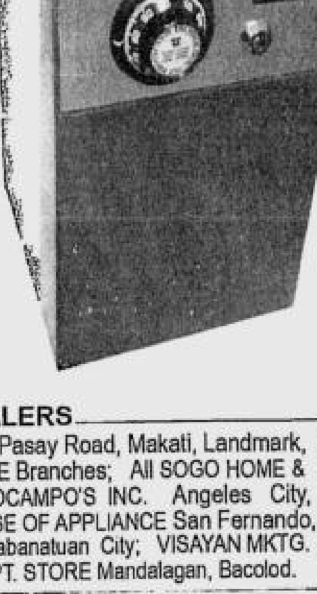
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2007

ISSN 0116-2642

INQUIRER

Vol. 22 No. 226

OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
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Joke only?

EDITORIAL

LAST WEEK, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO cracked a joke that had the opposition and her critics seriously thinking about what her real plans are once she steps down from the presidency in 2010. Speaking at the Subic Bay Freeport last Wednesday, Ms Arroyo said: "Who knows? I may run for Congress in my hometown." Then she flashed a wide grin that was shown on national television by the government station NBN.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Sr. said the joke (if it was a joke) "betrayed her intent to stay in power." Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano speculated that she wants to be prime minister in a prospective parliament that would be established through an amendment of the Constitution. He said it makes no sense for her to become a member of the House of Representatives because only a president is immune from prosecution. (Still, a position in Congress—or in Parliament, in case the Constitution is amended—would give her a platform from which she can defend herself and possibly avoid a fate similar to that of former President Joseph Estrada.)

If what Ms Arroyo said was not really a joke, then the people have cause to be alarmed and to be afraid. She may be planning to do a Marcos. (President Ferdinand E. Marcos imposed martial law on Sept. 21, 1972, a year before he was to complete his second term as president.) She said in 2002, on the occasion of the martyrdom of Jose Rizal on Dec. 30, that she was not running for election, only to reverse herself in October 2003 and announce that was seeking a full six-year term as president. She ran in 2004 and was proclaimed president although up to now the legitimacy of her presidency remains in question, largely because of the "Hello Garci" issue.

From 2004 up to now, she has spent a great part of her time strengthening her hold on power and shoring up her defenses against continuing challenges to the legitimacy of her presidency. And it is believed that because her position is tenuous, she has come to depend more and more on the military for support. That is why, her critics say, she cannot act more forcefully on the issue of political killings because she would be going against the secret anti-insurgency plans of top military generals.

Depending on one's viewpoint, Ms Arroyo has already done enough good for the country and she can afford to rest on her laurels in 2010—or she has done enough damage and she should finally retire from politics to give other, younger leaders a chance to serve the nation. It should be enough honor for her to be known as the longest-serving president in the post-Marcos period.

Ms Arroyo should take a hint from her approval ratings which have been consistently low, if not negative. The latest Social Weather Stations survey of June 27-30 showed that satisfaction with her has stayed neutral, with 39 percent satisfied and 42 dissatisfied, for a net rating of -3. A Pulse Asia survey in the last three months said 34 percent of the people were critical of Ms Arroyo's performance, while 30 percent approved of her. She is the only president in the post-Marcos period who has had a long, unbroken string of negative net satisfaction ratings in nearly four years (2004-2007), from a low of -33 in May 2005 to a high of -3 in June 2007.

She should also take a hint from the results of the recent senatorial elections which, despite the use of a lot of public funds and government machinery and the intensive efforts of leaders and campaigners to make administration candidates win, ended in a 7-3-2 victory for the opposition. Are these signs that the people love and admire her, and would like her to stay in government, or possibly, even lead them again?

Ms Arroyo should know when to stop. It's a good thing the impeachment move is not being pursued; for one thing, the House of Representatives is firmly under the control of administration congressmen and no such move will prosper there.

She and her political allies should abandon all plans to have the Constitution amended to allow Ms Arroyo to run for member of Parliament, and then, possibly aspire for the post of prime minister.

Ms Arroyo's announcement that she will run for congressman was a joke? If she does run for congressman (or member of Parliament), the joke will be on the long-suffering and long-seething Filipino people.

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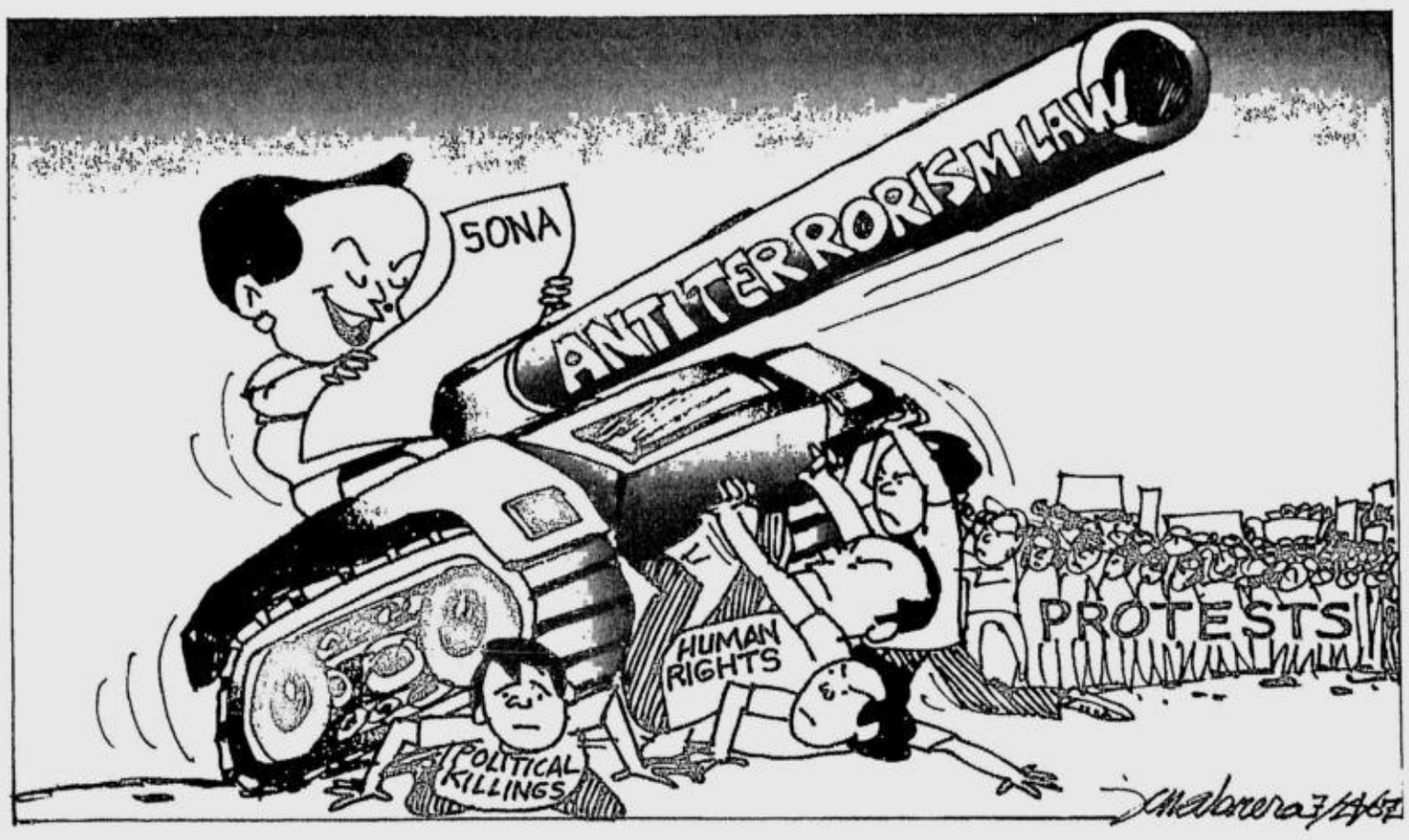

Invisibility cloaks

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"IS THAT LIKE THE BATTLE OF HOGWARTS?" the 15-year-old granddaughter asked, putting down her book, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows." Mia heard my snort after reading that Sen. Panfilo Lacson called his colleagues, Francis Escudero, Alan Peter Cayetano and Jinggoy Estrada, "mongrels." Why? Because they'd vote for Manuel Villar as Senate president.

"No, *hija*. 'Mongrel' means '*askal*' or *aso sa kalye*," I replied. "Oh," she said, then returned to J.K. Rowling's seventh book, released in 93 countries Saturday. One is grateful when grandchildren read.

But you also swallow hard. In public schools, three students still make do with one textbook. Worse, errors mar books from science, grammar to civics. That indefatigable gadfly, Marian School's Antonio Calipjo Go, also showed history books depicting the dictatorship as Imelda Marcos claims. "God can not alter the past," Samuel Butler said, "but historians can."

These errors miseducate generations of kids. The question of values is more prickly. How do you explain to the young that "crusader" Panfilo Lacson graduated from torture chambers of the dictatorship's Military Intelligence Security Group? "A good tree bears good fruit," the Teacher said. "And a bad tree bears bad fruit."

Or is this just "ovarian lottery"? Sick children of the better-off are hospitalized. They get "shots" against TB, measles, polio, etc. They'll be taller and heavier, too. Malnutrition stunts 28 out of every 100 kids in Cebu, a study by the University of North Carolina and the University of San Carlos found. "By age 8, classmates tower over them by 11 centimeters."

But large populations in rural areas or city slums do without. Only 58 out of every 100 one-year-olds here are fully immunized. But in the thin-crust of the well-off, 81 percent are immunized. At the rate nutrition improves, it'll take more than two decades to leash the scourge.

Will our kids be shorter, thinner and frailer than their counterparts in Malaysia or Thailand? IQ dimmed during early childhood is irretrievable. As adults, will their "remote controls be short of a few buttons"?

Jockeying for the 2010 elections, many "leaders" ignore basic issues. Obsession with committee chairmanships blot out the looming Basilan conflict. How can we shore up, for example, a health system sapped by continued migration?

"The Philippines is the only country in Southeast Asia without a National Health Service Act," notes the study, "The Brain Drain Phenomenon and Its Implications to Health." Malaysia requires medical graduates, local or foreign, to serve three years in government health service. In Indonesia, every year of specialist training must be matched by a year of national health service.

"The situation now is more critical and entirely of a different nature from the past decades," write Jaime Galvez Tan, Fernando Sanchez and Virginia Balanon. "A compulsory, instead of a voluntary, service is called for."

Or consider the water crunch. Rich man or poor man must get at least three liters a day. A household of five consumes 120 liters daily—"the equivalent of six heavy suitcases," notes Worldwatch Institute.

Our 11-year-old grandson Adrian assumes it will flow, when he turns the tap. Not Berto who lives 71 kilometers from the city. From his upland hut, it takes 20 minutes to descend to the well, when it's not raining. And he climbs back in 45 minutes, with two pails or a hollowed bamboo pole, after lining up for the bucket. "Sometimes, we make two or three trips a day."

In Cebu City, 58 percent tap into pipes of neighbors. The water firm serves less than half of residents. The poor buy murky water from ambulant peddlers at three times the cost of piped water. City Hall has a "water policy black hole." In contrast, Manila Water earlier jacked up connections from 325,000 to 593,000 taps and, in the process, reduced the cost of water by 29 percent. It trimmed staff by half while ensuring 24-hour service.

San Roque Parish of Mandaue City won permission from the Metro Cebu Water District's Community Faucet Program "to tap into the mains and at low cost, if they lay pipes and install the taps." And in Liloan, a low-cost, $25,000 wastewater treatment facility from an Asian Development Bank loan at the public market "has almost eliminated fecal coliform pollution along its coastline." Cooperative members contribute P10 daily to retire the loan in the "first-of-its-kind project."

"Are small pipes and flexible payment options the future of connections?" Philippine E-News asks. "If so, just how big does small deliver?"

Answer: Completed this May, a one-year Manila Water project saw 40,000-plus households living in shanties on stilts along the 9-kilometer Manggahan Floodways that opens into Laguna de Bay get connections that now furnish treated and metered water 24 hours a day.

Manggahan's only source of water before was a communal deep well, which gurgled up murky water six hours a day. It charged P50 per cubic meter. In contrast, Manila Water service costs a fifth—P10 per cubic meter—plus P2 which goes to the homeowners' association which reads meters and collects payments.

Harry Potter, we read, "made his way through the forest of death, under an invisibility cloak" in the Battle of Hogwarts. Perhaps, national leaders, who bicker among themselves into futility, should become invisible, too. After all, much of what has been achieved has come mainly from citizens—despite them.

* * *

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Let's join the NPA

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ARMY CHIEF LT. GEN. ROMEO TOLENTINO says Jonas Burgos is really a member of the New People's Army. He belongs to the NPA Front Committee 2 based in Bulacan.

Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres, spokesperson of the Army, corroborates: "When we looked at his background, we found sufficient reasons to believe, from documents and witnesses, that he has links with the NPA."

What makes these statements the most idiotic things in the world?

First off, we have only the word of the AFP, particularly the incredibly named Intelligence Service of the AFP, headed by someone called the "Emperor"—unlike Nero he doesn't fiddle while Rome burns, he flings P500 bills during Christmas parties while people die—that this is so. They can always say that Burgos is/was a member of the Abu Sayyaf Front Committee 3 1/2 based in Culi-Culi, or worse the Comelec Front Commission 200 Percent based in Maguindanao, and trot out all sorts of witnesses to prove it (in these days of high prices and high taxes they go for a dime a dozen), and none will be the wiser. At least no one can challenge it, and if they wanted to whom do they take their challenge to?

All this proves in fact is that as far as intelligence goes, we are completely at the mercy of these idiots.

Indeed, more than that, all it proves is that in this country, we do not only give the powers of judge, jury and executioner to the accuser, we give them to the accused. It was so when GMA stood accused of stealing the vote: She judged herself innocent, ruled that the politics of hate was to blame, and punished herself by continuing to rule. And it is so now that the military stands accused of murdering Burgos: They have judged themselves innocent, ruled that Burgos was to blame, and punished themselves by being free to murder some more—in more ways than one. It would be funny except that in this country, when you say that the accused has the powers of judge, jury and executioner, the executioner tends to be literal.

Still more than that, all it proves is that in lieu of relentlessly ferreting out wrongdoers, government ruthlessly stamps out witnesses. It was so then when Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan were court-martialed for offering testimony that GMA cheated. It is so now when prosecutor Manny Velasco was sacked for offering to prosecute several of "Emperor's" men for the crime. This is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth as told by them, the lot of them, and no one but them.

Second off, as Burgos' kin and friends have pointed out, even if Jonas was NPA, what of it? Last they looked, there was no law that said a suspected NPA may be abducted and made to disappear, possibly forever. Last they looked, the law said citizens were presumed innocent until proven guilty.

What makes Tolentino's and Torres' statements especially dangerous, apart from idiotic, are the use of the word "front." That makes political activists, party-list members, ex-detainees, NGO workers, Marxists, leftists, socialists, utopian idealists, reformists, reaffirmists, rejectionists, dead-serious materialists, cockeyed optimists, Rastafarians, and anyone wearing anything red or any hue thereof in any rally, forum, or family reunion an NPA. For which the punishment is death.

That is not something that could happen, that is something that is happening. Look at the number of the dead, among them kids barely able to have their first loves, and weep. They are NPA? With the antiterror law, expect the lines between armed and unarmed, dissenter and combatant, NPA and activist, to get more blurred and the body count to get more plentiful.

Last, and most importantly, well, Tolentino and Torres should really be commended—by the NPA. They have just become the second and third best recruiter for them (GMA remains No. 1). If the NPA had decided to buy a full page in the INQUIRER and made a pitch to add to their ranks, they couldn't have done a better job.

We know that Jonas' father, Joe, was also called a communist during Marcos' time. For publishing the Malaya—no publication during his watch could have been better named—and for daring to come out with stories that revealed Marcos' medals to be fake, Joe Burgos was tagged a communist by Marcos' military. For which the punishment was death, and which would have been carried out had not God or Edsa intervened. For helping to improve the lot of fellow farmers—no one has been a better son to his father—and for daring to join others in exposing GMA's presidency as fake, Jonas Burgos has been tagged a communist by the dictator's military. For which the punishment has been death—alas, without God or Juan de la Cruz to stay its hand.

If all this has any lesson to impart, it is simply this: When this country starts calling too many people NPA, it does not have too many NPA, it has only one dictator.

Joe Burgos went on to reap not just the gratefulness of his nation but the appreciation of the world. He became one of the world's top 100 journalists when the world celebrated the end of the last century—and second millennium—in 2000. Jonas Burgos may not reach such spectacular heights, but I do know he will go on to reap the gratefulness of the farmers he tried to help and the appreciation of the nation he served so well and proudly when this evil is over and justice—no, sanity—is restored to it. One day, he will, if posthumously, have a medal pinned to his chest, worth more than even the Medal of Honor they give to soldiers who go over and beyond the call of duty. He has wrought by far the more heroic deed. He has shown a willingness not just to die for democracy but to live for it.

Jonas Burgos is an NPA? Then by God, by Allah, and by Marx, let us all join the NPA.

Garcia didn't have the numbers

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

YESTERDAY, THE HOUSE OPPOSITION AND the camp of Rep. Pablo Garcia united to try to prevent Jose de Venecia from winning an unprecedented fifth term as speaker. Garcia's camp had been insisting on a secret balloting and JDV finally agreed on one condition: that it's done in a coalition caucus and not on the floor. His argument was simple: because the vote for the leadership is very significant, each representative's constituents should know whom he voted for. Moreover, settling the speakership issue in caucus and then voting openly on it would clear the divide between majority and minority.

JDV's camp agreed to a secret voting last July 2, but Garcia failed to show up. It was set again for July 10, then July 14, then July 21, but the representative from Cebu never showed up. Finally, last Sunday, July 22, a caucus was supposed to have been held in Malacañang on the President's invitation, but Garcia again didn't show up. Instead, his group held its own meeting at the Manila Polo Club. As it turned out, his followers backed out from nominating Garcia when it became clear that he couldn't muster the numbers thus, JDV ran unopposed.

* * *

My husband and I were in the United Kingdom recently on the invitation of our daughter and son-in-law who were taking their annual holiday. Their choice was most interesting, to say the least. We came at a time when the UK was troubled by car bombing attempts in London and Glasgow, and the big shocker was that majority of those involved were foreign doctors working in Britain. The bombing attempts brought out intelligence reports on the existence of 200 terrorist networks all over Britain and Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, former chief of the MI5, warned that it faces a terrorist threat of "unprecedented scale, ambition and ruthlessness," including the possibility of biological and nuclear warfare.

But the Britons just went on with their lives and preoccupations. We queried some people if they weren't worried, and they replied that this was nothing compared to what they went through when the Irish Republican Army was still active in the '90s.

* * *

The only overt signs of tension were the tight security at government institutions and bag inspection in museums and tourist attractions. We watched from behind the gate of Downing Street as a delivery car was allowed to enter Downing Street where Prime Minister Gordon Brown occupies the dark gray brick house at No. 10. A two-foot tall metal barrier stopped the car a little distance from No. 10 and a security officer knelt down to search its underbelly presumably for bombs. When the car was cleared, the metal barrier disappeared electronically into the ground.

* * *

Despite the bomb threats, hundreds of tourists still gawked at the changing of the guards at Buckingham Palace or at the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London. British media spoke of the memorial service to mark the 10th anniversary of Princess Diana's death organized by her sons, Princes Harry and William, at the chapel in Wellington Barracks. Ten years after her death, the mythology of the "People's Princess" continues to hypnotize Britain and her lovely face jumps out, it seems, from every store window. About 2,000 books about her are said to be in the works, following the current bestseller, "The Diana Chronicles," by former Vanity Fair and New Yorker editor Tina Brown. The big question was, could the 60-year-old Camilla Parker-Bowles, now Duchess of Cornwall, uncertain of public opinion about her attending the memorial, be persuaded by Prince Charles to come?

* * *

There was also the breathless countdown to the launch of the seventh book on Harry Potter that author JK Rowling swears is the "final" work. Kids in Potter costumes staked outside bookstores and supermarkets before store hours just to get hot copies and find out the final fate of this character, portrayed by a child actor who is now all of 17 years. As we were leaving, several areas of Britain and Wales suffered from enormous floods as torrents of rain poured in what was the "wettest summer" in decades. Flights and trains were delayed and tens of thousands were stranded in highways the whole night. The Royal Air Force sent out helicopters to rescue people, termed the biggest such deployment by the RAF in peace time. Ministers of Gordon Brown's Cabinet began trading blame for the disaster.

* * *

We watched from the sidelines as Britain and Russia engaged in what the London media termed "a stand-off that brought back memories of the Cold War." Britain had earlier expelled four Russian diplomats after Russia refused to extradite former KGB bodyguard Andrei Lugovoi, whom Britain has accused of having poisoned with radioactive polonium-210 a former KGB agent and British citizen named Alexander Litvinenko in a London sushi bar, not far from the St. James Palace. Russia retaliated by also expelling four British diplomats and threatening to suspend all cooperation with Britain on terrorism and withdraw from the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. Recall that seven years ago, the Russians also wanted Britain to extradite self-exiled billionaire Boris Berezovsky, a British citizen and arch critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, to no avail.

The recent tit-for-tat, which has brought relations between the two countries to a new low, has rattled Europe and the United States. Various European countries, doubtless concerned about their huge dependence on Russia's vast oil and gas fields, guardedly called on it to cooperate with Britain. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was more emphatic, saying it involves "the rule of law."

Where this showdown will lead no one knows. But it highlights the enormous headache that the ex-KGB lieutenant colonel now at Russia's helm has become for the Western world.

Talking of sex, gender and HIV/AIDS

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IN HER BLOG, LAWYER AND HUMAN AND REproductive rights activist Carolina Ruiz-Austria writes about a television ad for "Trojan" condoms that, even as it contained no nudity or even sexual innuendo, was uniformly rejected by the major American television networks.

As Ruiz-Austria describes the ad, it opens to a bar scene in which a group of gorgeous women are shown bored by the "pigs" surrounding them. They are literally "pigs," as the men are shown wearing porcine faces. That is, until one of the "pigs" approaches a condom dispenser and buys himself a Trojan, instantly turning into a hunk who gets the attention of all the women in the bar. Before then, there has been no dialogue or copy shown, but as the women flock around the pig-turned-human, one word appears on the screen: "Evolve."

Maybe the television executives were offended by the idea that safe sex—or the promise of it—is a turn-on. Or were they afraid that they would be accused of "promoting" promiscuity? And "Temptation Island" isn't advocating sexual recklessness?

Ironically, there's another condom ad I saw recently on local TV, although this ad aired on a cable channel. The ad shows a young man scolding a little boy in the supermarket, who is acting up and tossing junk food into the cart. When the man scolds the boy, the boy throws a tantrum and falls to the floor, kicking up a fuss. As the camera focuses on the man's face, this bit of copy appears: "Use condoms."

* * *

I LAUGHED when I saw the "use condoms" ad, just as I broke into a guffaw after hearing Ruiz-Austria describe the "evolve" ad. But I'm guessing that our so-called moral betters would have recoiled, turned off not just by the unapologetic promotion of condom use, but by the very idea of safe sex, or even just of sex.

As Meechai Viravaidya, Thailand's famed "Mr. Condom" and noted family planning advocate and anti-AIDS activist, once said of AIDS: "If it was caused by falling down and hurting yourself, everybody would be in favor of a cure. But bring sex into the picture, and everybody says it's your own fault."

That's why, at the height of media coverage of HIV/AIDS, there were actually so-called "responsible people" who said people living with HIV only had themselves to blame, and that to spend public money on the care of PLWHs, or on their cure, was simply to throw good money after bad, since these people were "going to die anyway."

And yet, despite the growing number of new infections, and the serious implications on the capacity of overburdened health systems in developing countries, influential sectors have also blocked most efforts at public education and awareness, especially those promoting condom use.

* * *

AND yet, as Ruiz-Austria points out, any public discussion of HIV/AIDS needs to go beyond just condoms. Human Rights Watch in a report issued in 2004, she said, already noted "the link between conservative attitudes on sexuality and the growing gap in access to contraceptives, specifically the condom, to the hidden threat of HIV/AIDS."

Advocates have also begun to change their approach to HIV/AIDS, noted Ruiz-Austria, "talking about it alongside issues of gender, rights and sexual health."

Raquel Ignacio, a trainer and organizer for Action for Health Initiatives Inc. (Achieve), told an assembly: "It has been interesting to note that over 92 percent of those who tested HIV positive in the country in fact cite heterosexual sex as the primary mode of transmission and yet programs and approaches have hardly considered how sexual power relations figure in all these things."

Ignacio said that instead of challenging "male privilege" and male-defined concepts of sexual pleasure, many advocates just did exactly what the conservative forces expected of them, "targeting sex outside of marriage and failing to point out that monogamous women within marriage were also at risk."

"While there is nothing wrong with a non-judgmental attitude when talking about multiple partners or non-marital sex per se in the context of consent and responsibility, the problem is that we haven't really hit upon the problem of why Filipino men aren't using condoms in the first place and why women (even sex workers) are in no position to even negotiate condom use!" Ignacio said.

Ruiz-Austria adds that "low condom use among Filipino men has been noted in previous, as well as current, research. Recently of course, new infections have been most noted among returning overseas workers since testing is mandatory and imposed by host countries. Likewise Filipino women, specifically those whose partners are seafarers, account for many of the new cases."

* * *

WHERE before the HIV/AIDS situation in the country was described as "low and slow," given the lack of support for AIDS efforts here, most experts are more inclined to say it is now "hidden and growing."

While the fevered media attention on HIV/AIDS, and the people living with the disease, has abated, "apathy and indifference are probably just as insidious, probably more so ... as it leads people into thinking that it does not concern them," wrote Bong Austero, president of the Remedios AIDS Foundation, in his column yesterday.

"HIV/AIDS: Break the Silence" is the title of a concert, which takes place tonight at 6 p.m. at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium at the RCBC building. It is meant not just to raise much-needed funds for Remedios, but also to re-awaken public awareness about HIV/AIDS and its prevention and cure. HIV/AIDS never really disappeared from the Philippine landscape, and it probably won't in the foreseeable future. We just need to acknowledge it's here, care for the people living with the disease, and ensure that its spread is slowed down, if not curtailed entirely.

So young, and so disappointing

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

AT LAST WEEK'S HISTORIC SUMMIT ON POLITIcal killings and politically motivated disappearances, Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno opened his keynote address with an unusual—and for precisely that reason highly evocative—salutation: "My fellow apostles of human rights," he began.

* * *

It is no secret that Puno takes his religious commitments seriously; the Court's website informs us, for instance, that he serves as a lay preacher in the United Methodist church. It was evident that his faith, and that service, animated the keynote speech; the language, the imagery, even the very structure of his thought were positively biblical.

He spoke about parrying initial skepticism about the summit "with the patience of Job." He said that one of the reasons for calling the summit in the first place was to "revive our righteous indignation" (he had noted that the sheer scope of the problem of political violence had "anaesthesized" the public's "sense of shock"). To drive his points home, he borrowed both the phrasing and the rhythm of the psalms: "The Constitution is not only the refuge of the worthy but also the worthless, it is not only the fortress of the strong but also the weak."

He even managed to return a hallowed phrase in jurisprudence ("on the altar of," a formula constitutionalists use to death) to its religious roots. "By calling this summit," he said, "we are affirming that before the universal altar of human rights there can be no atheism, nor agnosticism on our part."

* * *

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano led the opening prayer in yesterday's first session in the Senate, calling on "Lord Father God" to help the chamber "pass laws that will prosper the nation," and quoting extensively from Psalm 1. It was an inspired choice. The first psalm distinguishes between two ways of life: no, not between majority and minority, but between the good and the wicked.

* * *

Another first-time senator quoted from the Bible, too. Unfortunately for the many who reposed their trust in him last May 14, the young Sen. Francis Escudero ("Chiz" to everyone) not only failed to satisfactorily explain why he broke ranks with the opposition; he also betrayed his ignorance of the spirit of scripture.

Escudero was the last of five senators to stand and explain their choice for Senate president, after Jinggoy Estrada, Ping Lacson, Kiko Pangilinan and Jamby Madrigal. He started off well: "It is written in the Good Book," he said, that we should not judge lest we be judged. He went on to paraphrase the rest of the passage (from Matthew 7). In the New American Standard Version, the passage reads: "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."

It quickly became clear, however, that Escudero had merely used scripture for rhetorical purposes; he defended his vote for Sen. Manuel Villar, not by discoursing on Villar's merits, but by arguing that no one had the right to say who was truly opposition and who was not. In the mellifluous monotone (a contradiction, I know, but let it pass) that he has made famous, he said no one could claim the crown ("*walang sinuman ang puwedeng umangkin ng korona*"), the right, that is, to judge whether a senator was oppositionist or not.

This is a breathtaking claim. Does Escudero mean he cannot be classified as pro-administration, simply on his say-so? Does he mean his actions, his votes in the Senate for example, really do not matter, because he is an oppositionist at heart?

* * *

Here's the problem: Chiz thought the biblical passage he quoted meant no one can act as judge, no one can sit in judgment.

This is a misunderstanding. The passage does not seek to stop men and women from judging other men and women. How else can we distinguish between the good and the wicked? Instead, it seeks to reintroduce integrity into the act of judging. In the way we judge, we shall be judged. By our own measure, we shall be measured.

But really, all this is beside the point. Escudero's appropriation of scripture was merely meant to bolster his argument—it was a personal decision to support Villar, he said—with the weight it did not have.

We recommend another scriptural passage for him: Mene mene tekel upharsin.

* * *

Political tacticians will be debating this tricky issue for years. Should Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia have accepted Speaker Jose de Venecia's offer last Saturday to conduct a secret balloting in Malacañang?

* * *

For the first time since the legislative elections of 1987, the Senate Electoral Tribunal will be in the national spotlight. The nine-person panel consists of three senators from the majority, three from the minority, and three justices of the Supreme Court. Sources tell me that Senior Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing will serve as chair; he will be joined by Justices Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez and Alicia Austria-Martinez. The minority will be represented by Lacson, Rodolfo Biazon and Antonio Trillanes.

* * *

At the end of the summit on political violence, I chanced upon Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, the Armed Forces chief of staff, briefing his men (there were about 30 of them, many of them with stars on their shoulders), outside the Manila Hotel, somewhere near the entrance to the Champagne Garden. Before I turned around and headed back inside the hotel, I heard him say: "As you have observed, defensive *sila ngayon. So panalo tayo ngayon sa round na 'to.*"

Call it win-win.

* * *

Email: jnery@inquirer.com.ph

Coterminous

YOUNG BLOOD

Jo M. Mendoza

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

EVERY DAY, MY MOTHER AND I TAKE A CAB ON OUR WAY to work. I've probably met half of the population of taxi drivers in this country. Before I hail a cab, I pray that I will get a decent cabbie, then switch on my X-ray vision when a taxi pulls up trying to look into the driver's soul before getting in.

I spend an hour every morning inside a taxi bound for Roxas Boulevard in Pasay from Quezon City. Each weekday morning I get into a cab, I make eye contact with the driver through the rearview mirror, give him the directions (to mom's place first, then mine), settle down, pull out my makeup kit and make myself presentable. When mom gets off on Taft Avenue, I repeat the directions to my office, zone out, iPod in hand, take my wallet out when we pass the Cultural Center of the Philippines and pay the driver when we reach my destination. Every morning is a scripted affair, and I should have a mind to tape the instructions to be played in succeeding trips.

Inside my cubicle at the office, I can't see how different sitting in my swivel chair from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m each working day is from riding a taxi along the same route for an hour every day. I am amazed at how I can bear being sedentary for so long. I have whiled my days away by being a robot. Inside a taxi, I am just a depressingly empty person going from one point to another. As part of a company which is in transition between two owners, I am a dispirited employee finishing task after task. My restless spirit is muffled, my passion diluted.

I can't be like this forever. I have a type A personality, which makes me a go-getter, a competitive individual, one who never says die. Cab drivers only know me as someone who spews out a complete paragraph of directions and shuts her mouth during the rest of the trip, except if to correct wrong turns or protest reckless driving. My boss and my colleagues only know me as their younger sister, who nods understanding to commands and wants also to please both head and subordinate.

When I sit in the backseat of a taxi, mum and indifferent, I frustrate the driver's effort to share his life with me, and give up a chance to learn something new as well as our opportunity to make a difference in the way we live our lives. When I get off in front of my office after failing to connect with the person, who brought me safely to the place where I make a living by routine, I fail to exist. In the few moments that we are with our families, our friends, our mentors, our neighbors and strangers, we do not live to pass each other by. Cliché as it may sound, all things are coterminous. We should not live for the past but for today, and all things in our future will fall into place. We have to make the most out of now.

Every day the sun goes down on what you were able to accomplish. It also sets on what you failed to do. Then one day, the sun will set for good. When that day comes, will you be happy with what your life has become? Or will you beg to be turned into a phoenix, rising from the ashes?

As I settle in the backseat, I catch the eye of the cab driver in the mirror, and smile. *Manong, kamusta? Sinong ibinoto niyong nanalo?* (How are you, sir? Who among those you voted for won?) The national elections are a popular topic of discussion and he launches a tirade about election fraud and corrupt officials. I take my headphones off and switch off my iPod. I take a deep breath. *Oo nga po, narinig ko din sa radyo kanina*... (Oh yes! I also heard earlier on the radio that ...)

Jo M. Mendoza, 23, works with Mirant Philippines.

Moderation

Edgardo Biado Jr.

HOW DID WE END UP BEING SLAVES TO THE A-LIST? WE disregard the things that matter, like family, humanitarianism and economics. We focus on the lifestyle of the rich and famous, on mimicking the Hollywood way and what we are made to believe to be beautiful.

I have nothing against the elite and the revelry associated with the title. I respect and admire those who wear the Tourbillon—up to a certain extent. I look up to some of them for their finesse and poise, to others for their unparalleled success stories and to still others for their philanthropy.

As a writer for another newspaper and something of a social butterfly, I've been to some events graced by members of Manila's version of young society. They're not the classic tête-à-têtes with wine and truffles. Rather, they're the quintessence of the "less is more" fashion sense and feature raunchy-named cocktails. Have we replaced Jackie O with Paris Hilton?

What have we gotten ourselves into? Is this our version of Sunset Strip, the Hills and Orange County? I highly doubt that this is what we would want to tell our grandchildren one day when they ask us how it was like when we were young.

I admit that I have taken part wholeheartedly in some all-night partying and drinking. I do not, however, experiment with mood enhancers (i.e. "recreational drugs"). I have a no-pills-and-powders policy, and I intend to stand by that. It bothers me to see people, prominent or otherwise, put such garbage into their bodies in the hottest clubs while dancing for everyone else to see.

Society clearly dictates what we should do, where to do it and how to look like while doing it. The fashion industry says that thin is in. I say, healthy is in. We can marry those two concepts, and maintain a good physique without being anorexic. Crème de cassis is a great drink, but it's a waste if you just throw it up after having one too many. Fresh and beautiful in couture at 10 p.m. good. What's better is still fresh and beautiful in still clean and intact couture at 6 a.m. when you are on your way home.

Yes, it's fun to do all those things while we still can. Young society is always looking for excitement—I get that. We always want to be at par with Beverly Hills. But we have to understand that we don't always have to do what they do there. How many celebrities do we have to see get arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol before we learn our lesson? Are we waiting to get arrested ourselves?

Think about it, people. Our youth is not an excuse to be foolish. As we've heard over and over again, moderation is the key. It's not going to make us less of who we are if we apply that to our lives. High-society parties at the old Manila Hotel decades ago were known for their class, glamour and sophistication. What are our parties known for?

Edgardo Biado Jr., 23, is a regular contributor to another newspaper.

HSA is not about GMA

LETTERS

GOING OVER THE LIST OF THOSE opposing the Human Security Act, one can easily see that most, if not all, belong to the usual anti-Arroyo cabal and militant organizations. These are the people who are wont to oppose anything that they perceive to be Malacañang-sponsored.

The antiterror law actually is no longer the original administration-sponsored bill. It has undergone more than 100 amendments. While it is still called the Human Security Act it is everything but what the administration had hoped for. Gov. Douglas "Dodo" Cagas of Davao del Sur, an outspoken member of the last Congress, describes the law as "inutile." Indeed, after its radical "legislative mastectomy" in the hands of opposition legislators, the law has been effectively defanged. Those in the know suggest that it would be more apt to describe the law as "opposition-sponsored."

We who have seen the face of terror and have not forgotten the savagery it has wrought upon mankind see no reason why some quarters are still in stoic denial of a need for the HSA. There may be some perceived threats to human rights, but these ought not to subordinate individual and state security, for we know too well that the forces of terror lurk near where our shield against them is weakest.

It is our view that there are sufficient safeguards and guarantees for the protection of our rights. In fact, we just have so much liberty to the point that we no longer can distinguish between the meaning of freedom and mob rule.

We recognize the contempt of the mainstream political opposition members, militants and the communists against the President, but they should not consider the law a personification of President Macapagal-Arroyo. The anti-Arroyo forces may have their own political agenda to promote, but we have our own safety to worry about. We ought to give the law and the law enforcers a chance to prove that the antiterror law is meant for the people's well-being.

—MENARDO WENCESLAO, mewenceslao@yahoo.com

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Antiterror law opens opportunities for human rights abuses

I COULD ONLY SHAKE MY HEAD in disbelief after learning that the Arroyo administration still implemented the Human Security Act of 2007 despite the law's overwhelming rejection by the people who see it as a mechanism to "legitimize" more human rights abuses against government critics and the opposition. Fears about the HSA are not unfounded. Even before the HSA's implementation, we saw how the present dispensation could so wantonly violate the rights of the people.

We don't need the HSA (antiterror law) in our country. Yes, we still have the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army and the Abu Sayyaf, but our strong military alliance with the United States and the peace talks should be enough to deal with these problems. The antiterror law only unleashes the dogs of government abuse on the people.

The administration may say that under the Constitution, it is also the responsibility of the government to maintain peace and order. But it can do this by strengthening our police force and sincerely pursuing the AFP Modernization Program.

In implementing the HSA, the country's policymakers are missing the point. The priority concerns of Filipinos are education, health, jobs and food security.

Poverty is the worst form of terrorism. The government must address and solve this age-old problem once and for all. Curtailing the people's freedom to air their grievances is like rubbing salt on an already gangrenous wound.

It has been decades since we had a servant-leader in the person of Ramon Magsaysay. I hope the country will have a leader like Panama's Omar Torrijos who insisted on taking control of the Panama Canal on behalf of his people, or Ecuador's Jaime Roldos Aguilera who bravely defied the world's most powerful countries so that Ecuadorians would be the only ones benefiting from their natural resources.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is an economist. She must use her presidency and her brilliant ideas on economics for the benefit of the people. She must now choose between hanging on to power indefinitely or making good use of her God-given abilities by sincerely serving the people, especially the poor and downtrodden.

Sadly, after six and a half years in power, Ms Arroyo and his minions have reduced the people into paupers and second-class citizens in their own country.

Filipinos have a great potential. Let us unite, act as one and aggressively pursue what is moral and just, and hold our past and present leaders accountable for their sins against the people. The nation has suffered so much.

—EDWARD FELIX M. DONATO, edwardfelixdonato @yahoo.com.ph

Real issue on CTPL

DEPARTMENT ORDER (DO) 2007-28 OUTlined the rules on the integration of the issuance and payment of Compulsory Third Party Liability (CTPL) in the Land Transportation Authority (LTA) database. It did not award "CTPL issuance" to the Government Service Insurance System.

The Department of Transportation and Communication has required the proponent to be ready within 90 days. During this 90-day period, there will be a transition phase. Once a proponent is chosen, the transition phase will cease.

The GSIS model is deemed to be the closest to the DOTC DO requirement. In our proposal, the GSIS will issue a Master Policy for CTPL. After this, the GSIS will proceed to distribute this business to participating private insurance companies through the process of reinsurance.

The National Reinsurance Corporation of the Philippines (PhilNaRe) will be the reinsurer, the one in charge of the distribution of the business. To date, PhilNaRe has already obtained the confirmation of 43 non-life insurance companies participating in the CTPL project.

PhilNaRe is the only reinsurance corporation in the Philippines. It is owned by 93 insurance companies and some private investors. It will be recalled that PhilNaRe was listed in the Philippine Stock Exchange in April of this year.

With 43 out of the 93 non-life insurance companies participating in the CTPL, I can't see the reason for the "uproar." Moreover, the CTPL premiums account for only an estimated 5.2 percent of the total non-life industry premium volume.

The DO addresses the problems surrounding the CTPL business. It is estimated that tax leakages from unreported CTPL insurance policies in 2003 amounted to around P268 million. The other concerns relate to overpricing of CTPL policies, issuance of fake policies and unpaid claims.

We think that the true issue should be public safety and convenience. The public should not be denied a program that is clearly beneficial to it.

—JOSEFINA L. VALERA, senior vice president, General Insurance Group, Government Service Insurance System, Roxas Boulevard, Financial Center, Pasay City

Lost moment of greatness

CONRADO DE QUIROS' COLUMN ON "Kadiri" and Manuel L. Quezon III's "Dark victory" (INQUIRER, 7/16/07) both hit the nail right on the head by showing what Team Unity candidate and recently proclaimed Sen. Miguel Zubiri truly is—an ambitious young man in a hurry to get to the top regardless of the means to get there.

Too bad, Zubiri missed a moment of greatness when he did not concede to Genuine Opposition candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel who was consistently in the 12th slot of the senatorial race before the Maguindanao votes were adjusted to accommodate a Zubiri "win." Zubiri could have done a Michael Defensor and earned a lot of praises and esteem. As it is, he is now known as the "Comelected senator of Maguindanao," which certainly is "a badge of dishonor." He is busy defending himself and justifying his "win" even as he expects brickbats, sneers and sufferance from his peers, if not from the public in general. He said his mother is so proud of him but then, only a mother can be proud of a son in such a situation.

On the other hand, Pimentel has emerged a winner as champion of electoral reforms and the nemesis of evil forces, particularly the Comelec, that undermine the sovereign will in this country. People are now rallying behind him. He deserves full support. It is now or never, for true electoral reforms.

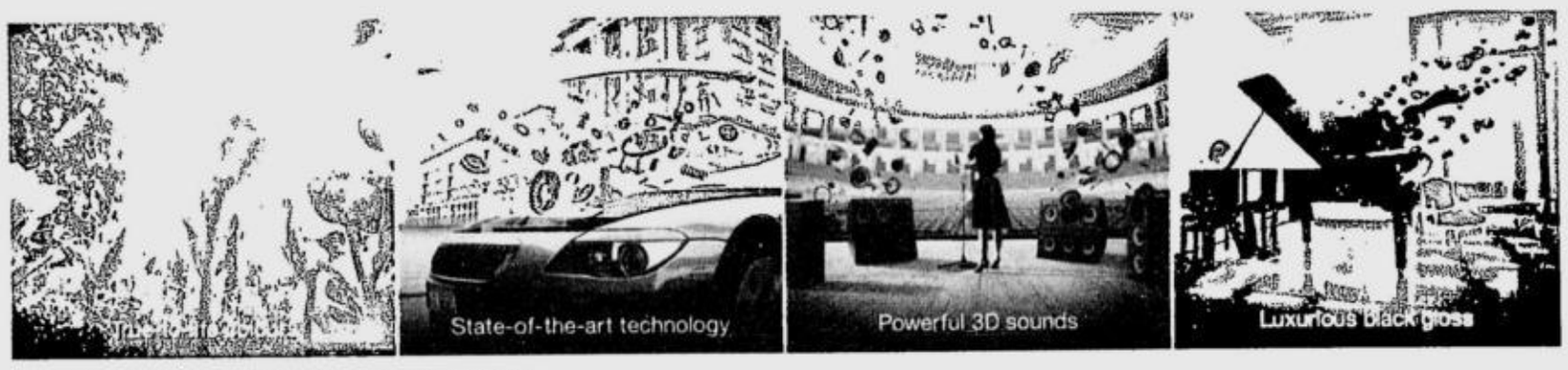
—CLAIRE DEL CARMEN, 36 Aberdeen, Project 8, Quezon City

Heavy traffic near school

MAYHALIGUE IN TONDO MANILA IS A ONE-way street every morning, and vehicles have to pass through Sanchez Street.

Unfortunately, due to illegally parked vehicles on Sanchez Street and to a dog cage placed on the corner of the street, vehicular traffic is at its worst. This needs urgent action because the place is adjacent to a school.

—FELIX YU, Binondo, Manila



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Army-NPA clash kills 12-yr-old boy

KANANGA, LEYTE—A 12-YEAR-OLD BOY AND three other noncombatants were killed when government soldiers and communist guerrillas clashed in a village near a town here before midnight Sunday, the military said yesterday.

Lt. Col. Lope Dagoy, commanding officer of the 19th Infantry Battalion, said soldiers belonging to the battalion were on patrol in the village of Tinghub in Villaba, Leyte when the guerrillas opened fire and started a 20-minute gun battle.

Dagoy said the guerrillas were led by a certain Geronimo Maceda of the communist New People's Army's Nepal Squad operating in northern Leyte.

Dagoy identified the fatalities as Feliciano Labrador, alias Peping, his wife Leonora and their son, Anthony, 12-years-old.

The fourth casualty was identified only as a certain Jesrel.

"They were in their house when the encounter happened but the rebels fired first at our troopers when they heard a dog barking at our soldiers," Dagoy said in a telephone interview.

He said the military believed the two are also members of the New People's Army as the father, Feliciano Labrador, "was a known NPA member," Dagoy said in a cell phone interview.

Dagoy also described Leonora and the couple's son, Anthony as rebel couriers.

His information could not be independently confirmed yesterday.

After the gunfight, Dagoy said the military recovered two M-16 Armalite rifles, one M-14 rifle, one rifle grenade, eight short magazines for M-16, five magazines for M-14 and ammunition for .45 cal. pistols.

Also recovered were communist documents, he said.

Dagoy said the soldiers turned over the bodies of the fatalities to Villaba Mayor Claudio Larrazabal but no one claimed them.

Dagoy said he felt sad over the death of Leonora and Anthony, saying they were just caught in the crossfire.

He blamed communist guerrillas for this, saying the rebels had been using women and children as shields against government soldiers.

The military has been accusing the guerrillas of recruiting children for combat, an accusation that the NPA has repeatedly denied.

Dagoy said the use of children and women for the insurgency campaign was a clear violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law that was signed when peace talks were still alive between the communist rebels and the government.

The clash followed the surrender of NPA member Ebel L. Celedio, alias Jeje, alleged member of an NPA unit known as Buhawi Platoon, Mt. Amandewin Command, North Leyte Front (NLF).

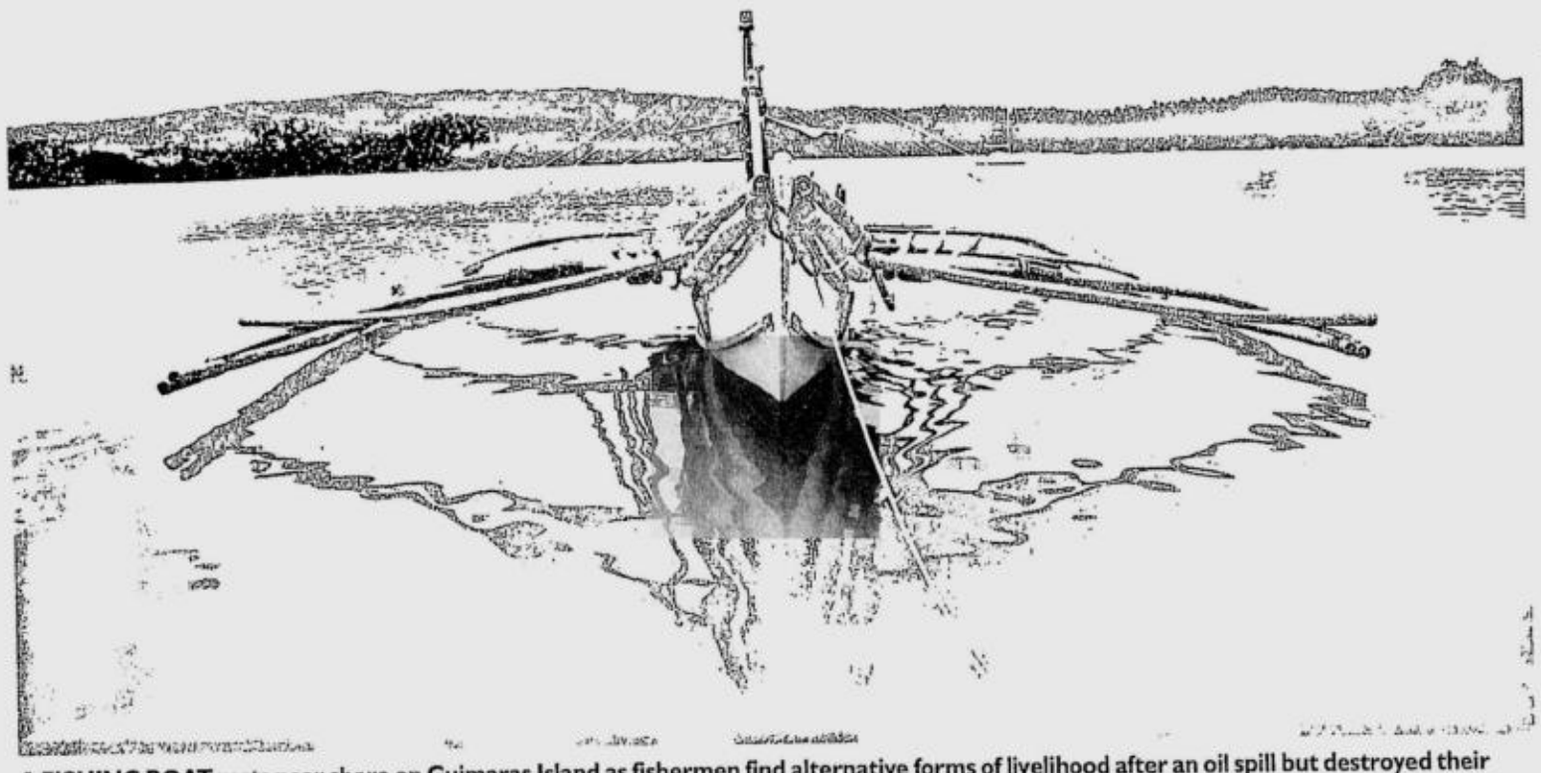
He surrendered July 3, 2007 in Sitio Catching, Barangay Bagabao, Leyte, Leyte.

In a separate clash, a suspected guerrilla was killed in a brief gunfight between guerrillas and an anti-insurgency unit of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Rodriguez, Rizal on Monday.

Senior Supt. Freddie Panen, Rizal police director, said police have yet to establish the identity of the slain NPA rebel.

Panen said members of a platoon of the PNP-Special Action Force were on patrol in Sitio Lubog, Barangay Boray when they were fired at by around 30 heavily-armed NPA rebels at about 5:15 a.m.

He said after a 15-minute exchange of fire, the rebels withdrew to the hilly part of the village, leaving behind their dead comrade. *Jani Arnaiz and Joey Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas and Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



A FISHING BOAT rests near shore on Guimaras Island as fishermen find alternative forms of livelihood after an oil spill but destroyed their fishing grounds. The spill was the worst in the country's history and covered mangroves, fishing areas and seaweed farms with thick, black oil.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Thousands of oil spill claims rejected

By David Israel Sinay
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE INTERNATIONAL OIL POLlution Compensation (IOPC) rejected bulk of the second batch of damage claims in connection with the Guimaras oil spill.

The London-based IOPC has identified less than 200 of the over 100,000 claims included in the second batch of claims for further review and validation, according to Rafael Coscolluela, presidential assistant for Western Visayas.

Coscolluela said he learned from IOPC claims manager Patrick Joseph that the IOPC had rejected majority of the claimants because they failed to meet the criteria for filing claims.

"The local government units have been informed that almost all of the claims were rejected," Coscolluela said.

He quoted the IOPC as saying that the second batch of claimants was "politically accommodated."

"These claims were filed before the elections. Since a lot heard that the first batch of claimants received claims of up to P30,000, somebody might have advised them to file their claims justifying their loss [brought about by the spill]," Coscolluela said.

The IOPC indemnifies losses resulting from oil spills.

He said that majority of the applicants failed to comply with the documentary requirements. Coscolluela noted that the rejected claims were those of claimants who were not listed as residents, were not in the voters' list, were not listed as members of any fishermen's organization, or were under age.

Based on its criteria, the IOPC would give compensation for any expense, loss or damage actually incurred due to the oil spill.

The IOPC also required the claimant to fully document the claim.

The IOPC engaged fisheries experts from the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Ltd. (ITOPF) to assess the damage to the claimants seeking compensation from the Fund.

The releases made to the claimants depend on the damage approval and assessment of the ITOPF.

The claimants' damage claims contained the amount of compensation derived from declaration of losses [reported by the claimants] and the average income of claimants before the oil spill.

The claimants were mainly fishermen, shell gatherers, fingerlings gatherers and fishpond operators, among others.

However, due to the lack of credentials to support that a claimant is involved in fishing, the village chiefs were tasked with the identification of residents directly and indirectly affected by the oil spill to be endorsed by the agriculture and fisheries council, mayor, municipal agriculturist, congressman, or the governor.

"The local officials find it hard to reject (the claims) outright. They just leave the validation of the claims to the IOPC. The claimants demanded endorsement from the agriculture and fisheries council, from the mayor, from the municipal agriculturist, from the congressman, or from the governor," Coscolluela added.

The IOPC has paid out around P177 million in settlement of claims made by over 22,000 residents whose livelihood suffered after the tanker Solar I sank on August 2006, spilling 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel in the area.

13 would-be voters die in Calbayog road crash

TACLOBAN CITY—THEY BEAT the deadline for voters' registration for the upcoming Sangguniang Kabataan elections in October but they will never cast their ballots after a fatal road crash in a remote village in Calbayog City on Sunday.

Chief Insp. Aniceto Tecbobolan, Calbayog police chief, said the tragic accident claimed the lives of 13 people, mostly in their teens and residents of Barangay Peña, 20 kilometers from the city proper. Some 30 others suffered injuries.

Tecbobolan said the victims were on a dump truck, which ran out of control while negotiating a sharp curve in Barangay Cagsalaosao, 8 km from the city proper, and collided with a motorcycle-for-hire, locally known as "*habal-habal*."

The truck swerved, throwing its passengers to the pavement, he said.

Those who died on the spot from serious head injuries were identified as Junmark Pogoso and Sherwin Duha, both 15; Junjun Francisco and Jordan Palatones, both 16, Bonbon Looc, and Ramil Cabig, 26. Arjay Boy Arabis and Reneboy Suarez, both 16, and Amador Maribojoc, 17, died on arrival at the St. Camillus Hospital.

Lope Caspe, 15, died while undergoing medical treatment.

Samley Ortega, 15, was brought to the Sanitarium Hospital but was declared dead on arrival. Joven Suarez, 16, died on the way to the hospital.

One of the passengers of the *habal-habal*, Amparo Banciano, 65, of Barangay Macatingog, also died on the spot.

Tecbobolan said the truck driver, Fernando Raypan, 28, would be charged with reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide.

Some of the injured were brought to the Calbayog Sanitarium Hospital for treatment. They were Eduardo Gonzales, 16; Romnick Cellar, 15; Reynaldo David, 16; Vermonte Mercader, 14; Darwin Lontoco, 15; Alfredo Evardone, 16; Salvador Domingo, 16; and Franklin Saba, 20.

Five others—Raypan; Junley de Jesus, 15; Edwin Punay, 16; Arnel Ronda. 15; and Benedict Prasmo, 19—were brought to the Our Lady of Purzuincula Hospital. Taken to the St. Camillus Hospital were Jobet Maribojoc, 15; Arnel Verba, 17; Raymond Maribojoc, 15; Jomar Ronda, 16; Ruby Gotchave, 16; Jun Kenko, 15; Raymond Valero, 15; Ignacio Borinaga, 17; Richard Dote, 18; Christian Ibajo, 15; Lunico Pacasa, 15; Lester Mejares. 15; Giovanie Mahinay, 17; and Ruby Carig, 21. *Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas*

3 poisoned, 5 taken ill by 'tulingan'

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Three elderly men died while five others were rushed to the hospital after eating "tulingan" (yellow fin tuna) at a gathering in a far-flung village in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque on Sunday, police said Monday.

Chief Supt. Napoleon Cachuela, Mimaropa police director, identified the fatalities as Paquito Mendiola, 66; Sabino Pastoral, 53; and Luisito Rioflorido, 51.

Cachuela said the victims were guests at the commemoration of the first death anniversary of a neighbor in Sitio Pag-asa, Barangay Masaguisi.

At around 5 p.m., the victims suddenly vomited while in the middle of their drinking party.

Cachuela said relatives of the victims tried to revive them but Mendiola and Pastoral died as they were being rushed to the hospital while Rioflorido died instantly. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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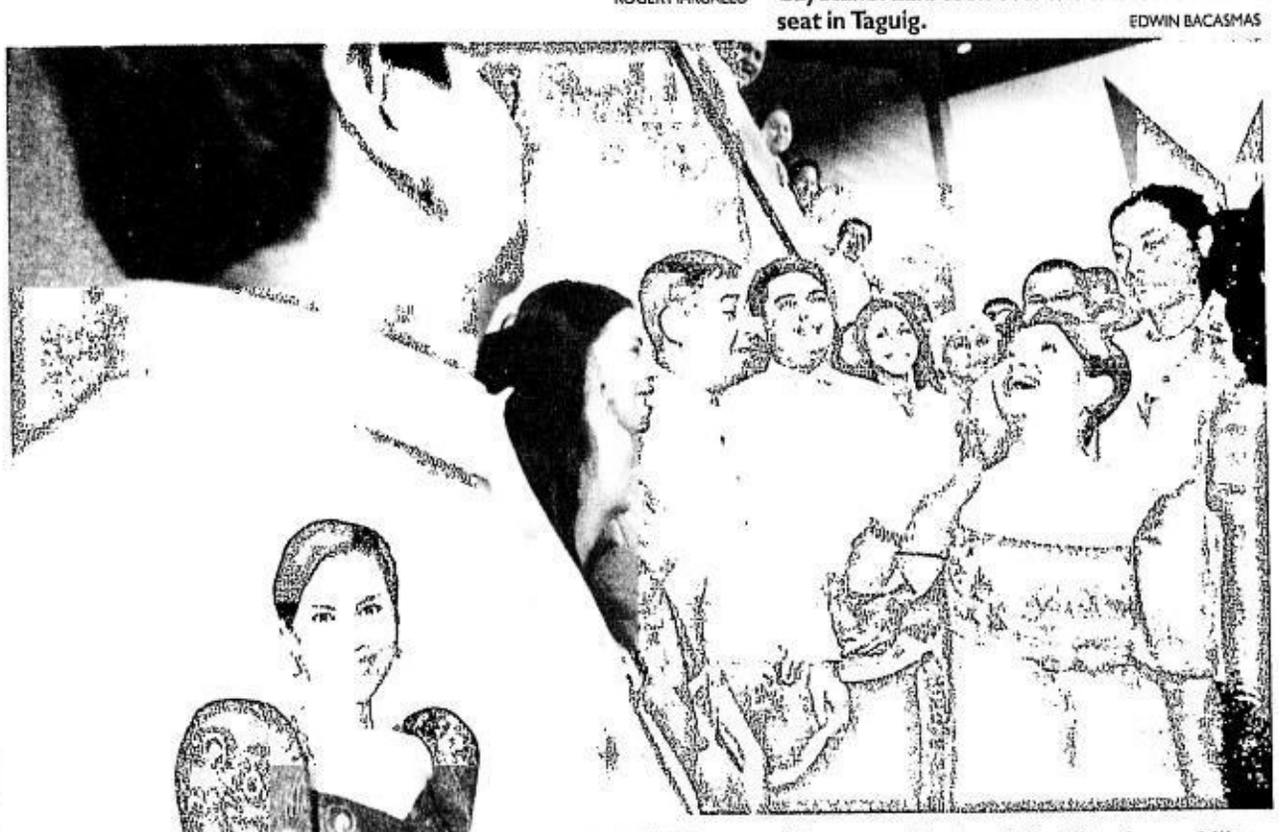
SONA SIGHTS

SENATORS Gregorio Honasan, Juan Ponce Enrile (with back turned), Loren Legarda and Francis Escudero (seated) during the opening session of the 14th Congress Monday ROGER MARGALLO

BROTHER and sister act: Senators Alan Peter and Pia Cayetano ROGER MARGALLO

REP. LANI Cayetano, wife of Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano. Lani took over her husband's old seat in Taguig. EDWIN BACASMAS

JOSE de Venecia takes his oath as Speaker of the House of Representatives for a record fifth term Monday. He is sworn in by Western Samar Rep. Sharee Ann Tan (left), the youngest member of the House and accompanied by his wife Gina de Venecia (right) and members of his family. LYN RILLON



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and husband First Gentleman Mike Arroyo with their daughter Luli, sons Dato and Mikey, accompanied by their wives. EDWIN BACASMAS

SEN. JUAN Miguel Zubiri speaks with Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, whose son Koko was dislodged from the 12th slot by Zubiri. ROGER MARGALLO

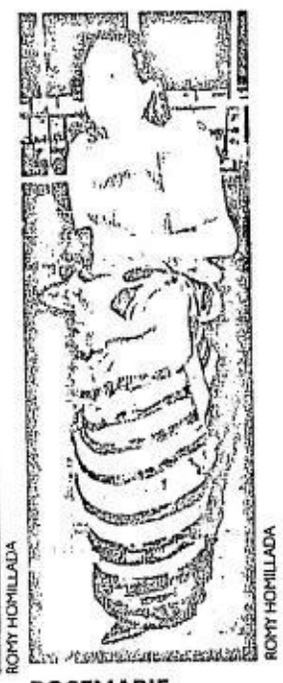
FORMER First Lady Imelda Marcos ROMY HOMILLADA

JIT REMULLA, wife of Cavite Rep. Crispin Remulla ROMY HOMILLADA

AUDREY Zubiri, wife of Senator Zubiri ROMY HOMILLADA

SHEILA Ysrael, wife of Laguna Rep. Dan Fernandez ROMY HOMILLADA

TOOTSIE ANGARA, wife of Rep. Sonny Angara ROMY HOMILLADA



ROSEMARIE Arenas, mother of Pangasinan Rep. Rachel Arenas ROMY HOMILLADA

PROTESTERS burn an effigy of President Macapagal-Arroyo during the rally at Commonwealth Avenue. JOAN BONDOC

MILITANTS portray President Macapagal-Arroyo as the "Queen of Darkness." JOAN BONDOC

RIOT police block militants from Southern Tagalog from getting near the Batasan complex along Commonwealth Avenue early in the morning of Monday. RAFFY LERMA

Pretty faces, dresses light up Batasan

From page A1

tested 12th Senate seat that her husband eventually won over Koko Pimentel.

"Rajo is a good friend, so he was able to make this in a week," she said of her midnight blue *terno* with full peacock-inspired beadwork that had no telltale signs of having been rushed for the occasion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo arrived in a reworked version of the same Rem Divino *terno* she wore to the state dinner for US President George W. Bush in 2003.

Unlike the President, however, a new lady solon ordered gowns from three different designers for the event. She eventually wore a blue *terno* by Designer No. 2.

Sartorial choices are just not the kind of talk you expect to hear in Congress, but at Monday's joint session, the interest was such as the media awaited the arrival of a fresh batch of young congressional and senatorial spouses.

They knew their fashion, and they knew how to work it, these young solons' wives. Never mind that they had to identify themselves after posing for a photograph.

New Tarlac Rep. Monica Louise "Nikki" Teodoro, a former model and the wife of incoming Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, was spotted in the session hall in a bright fuchsia *terno*.

Tootsie Angara, who came with father-in-law Sen. Edgardo Angara, also wore a Rajo Laurel gown, this one a black *terno* with a red sash. She is the wife of Rep. Sonny Angara.

Jit Remulla, wife of Rep. Crispin Remulla, wore a strapless black gown by designer Jojie Lloren.

With a bit of show biz thrown in, the Congress' red carpet was on a roll.

Sen. Loren Legarda arrived and waved at the people in the gallery like a movie star in an all-Filipiniana outfit, complete with a piña Maria Clara by the late Marina Antonio, a tambourine necklace and a mother of pearl minaudiere by Celestina, the brand designed by former model Tina Ocampo that sells for thousands of dollars in upscale boutiques abroad.

Sheila Ysrael may be a minor celebrity in local show biz, but as she stepped into the Batasang Pambansa's session hall, photographers scurried to get a shot of the actress who was in a pale-green piña gown. Ysrael's husband, the actor Daniel Fernandez, is the new congressman of Laguna's first district.

The actress Lani Mercado arrived with senator-husband Bong Revilla in a short piña ecru shift with matching bolero by Paul Cabral.

Cabral told the INQUIRER he also made the gowns of Angela Arroyo and Cacai Arroyo, the President's daughters-in-law. Angela is wife of Pampanga Rep. Mikey Arroyo. Cacai is married to newly elected Camarines Sur Rep. Dato Arroyo.

Lisa Araneta-Marcos, wife of Rep. Bongbong Marcos, ducked behind her mother-in-law, Imelda Marcos, when asked to pose for a photo. Never shy in front of the cameras, the elder Marcos described her pink embroidered *terno* as "from the Imelda collection."

Sen. Pia Cayetano picked an off-the-rack royal blue skirt by Mia Urquico and a white top with a *panuelo*-inspired collar. She carried a white Louis Vuitton purse.

Designer Frederick Peralta said he created the lime-green gown of Christine Escudero, the pregnant wife of Sen. Francis Escudero.

Lamenting that the Sona had become a fashion show, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago proposed that Congress hire a couturier to craft a common dress for all women lawmakers that they could wear for at least three Sonas.

Ironically, among the women senators, only Santiago had a change of clothes as she ditched the Filipiniana ensemble she wore in the Senate's morning session for a yellow ensemble for the afternoon Sona. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan*

Is GMA stepping down in 2010? Villar, Pangilinan bothered

SENATORS WHO ATTENDED THE President's Sona at the Batasan were not impressed by what they heard.

Senate President Manual Villar and Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said they were bothered that Ms Arroyo left the question hanging of whether or not she would step down in 2010.

Villar recalled how Ms Arroyo had promised she would not run in the 2004 presidential elections but she went back on her word.

"She said she will step down but she didn't say in 2010," said Pangilinan.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who again did not attend the Sona, said Ms Arroyo appeared to have taken credit for infrastructure projects that were started by the previous Estrada administration.

He said the Butuan bridge project mentioned was a project of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

"It sounded like an updated version of last year's travelogue," said Lacson.

The people, especially the poor, must benefit from President Arroyo's promises in her State of the Nation Address, said Fr. Dennis Espejo, head of the commission on service of the Diocese of Malolos.

Espejo said many were still poor.

"She has many good projects for the country, yet it seems people can not feel its good results. Many are still jobless," said Mark Romer Eleogo, a tourist guide and driver from Bulakan town.

Wilfredo Bernardo, 36, a farmer from the Science City of Muñoz, said he did not listen to the Sona:

"We do not have time for that. We are in the fields planting rice. We hope that after that Sona, we will have more food and income," Bernardo said.

In Isabela, public school teacher Fortunato Bayucan said teachers were hoping that the pay increase that the President promised would be released soon.

In General Santos City, educator Manny de Leon said the "President is only as strong as long as the support of the people is strong."

De Leon said election reforms, the fight against corruption, speedy justice, more budget for education "must be supported by performance, otherwise everything will only be lip service."

In Davao City, Frankie del Rosario, spokesperson of Bayan-Southern Mindanao, said "the experience of the people in Mindanao could very well debunk" the President's Sona.

"If we will look at the budget, 60 percent to 70 percent goes to foreign debt servicing, leaving almost nothing to basic services like education and health," he said.

Eid Kabalu, spokesperson of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said, Ms Arroyo "talked a bit about the peace process. But what she said is contrary to what is happening in Mindanao." He was referring to the massing up of government troops in Basilan and Lanao provinces.

In Quezon City, Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes said Ms Arroyo failed to address the issue of electoral fraud.

"What about the Bedol and Hello Garci scandal? We can't just forget about that," Reyes addressed the crowd of militants at a rally.

Stock market analysts observed that the state of fiscal reforms was distinctly missing from the Sona.

"There wasn't much on monetary and fiscal policies, which are in place. I don't think it will be a good idea to announce new taxes, the government, however, is working on growing its tax base by encouraging investments in the BPO (business process outsourcing) sector," Jose Vistan Jr, head of research at AB Capital Securities Inc., said.

The government recorded a P41-billion budget deficit in the first six months, going beyond the P31.3-billion ceiling for the period, as taxes and duties collected by its main revenue earners fell short of the targets.

The government aims to balance its budget shortfall by 2008.

To boost collections, Ms Arroyo cited the Cyber Corridor and the country's good position in offshoring. "While our strength in contact centers is established, we must focus on higher-value services such as accounting," she said.

The President lauded Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co.and Globe Telecom Inc. for investing P47 billion in international broadband links through regional hubs for redundant Internet connection.

"Information technology will also help BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue) bring in more collections," Ms Arroyo said.

"This is an indication that government will be putting in more resources to boost our competitiveness to attract more outsourcing businesses into the country," Paul Joseph Garcia, president of The Fund Managers Association of the Philippines said. *Reports from Carmela Reyes, Anselmo Roque and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon; Cristina Arzadon and Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon; Edwin O. Fernandez, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Julie S. Alipala, Jeffrey M. Tupas Inquirer Mindanao; Riza T. Olchondra and Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson, Business; Margaux Ortiz*

GMA: Don't count me out

From page A1

She did not address questions on the legitimacy of her presidency.

While making a roll call of political allies and foes as her way of "spreading cheer to the political spectrum," Ms Arroyo warned those eyeing the presidency in 2010 that she would be a force they would have to contend with.

"They say the campaign for the next election started on May 15, the day after the last. Fine. I stand in the way of no one's ambition. I only ask that no one stand in the way of the people's well-being and the nation's progress," she said, putting the spotlight on the Senate, which has several members expected to run in the next presidential election.

Ms Arroyo, who broke her promise not to run in 2004 and who hinted last week that she might seek a congressional seat after her presidency, indicated that she would step down in 2010.

"It is my ardent wish that most of the vision I have outlined will be fully achieved when I step down," Ms Arroyo said toward the end of her Sona.

Under the Constitution, Ms Arroyo, who is in favor of Charter change to pave the way for a shift to a parliamentary form of government, cannot run for another term as President.

Longest term since Marcos

In 2010, Ms Arroyo would have served as President for nine consecutive years, the longest since the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos ended his 20-year rule when he was ousted in 1986.

"It is my unshakeable resolve that the fundamentals of this vision will by then be permanently rooted, its progress well advanced and its direction firmly fixed with our reforms already bearing fruit. All that will remain for my successor is to gather the harvest. He or she will have an easier time of it than I did," she said.

The President fired off her Sona by telling allies and opponents that the time for politicking was over and that it was time to join hands to promote the country's progress and "to govern with wisdom, compassion, vision and patriotism."

"The time for facing off is over. The time is here for facing forward to a better future our people so desperately want and richly deserve," Ms Arroyo said.

Robust middle class

She laid her vision for the country well beyond her term in 2010.

"It is my wish that the Philippines could join the ranks of the rich countries in 20 years. By then poverty shall have been marginalized; and the marginalized raised to a robust middle class," she said.

"We will have achieved the hallmarks of a modern society, where institutions are strong. By 2010, the Philippines should be well on its way to achieving that vision," she said.

Thanking the 13th Congress, the President said tax reforms and fiscal discipline enabled the government to improve the country's macroeconomic condition and to invest hundreds of billions of pesos in human and physical infrastructure.

She enumerated investments still in the pipeline, which she had already been talking about in the past years.

Human capital formation

These include investments in physical, intellectual, legal and security infrastructure to increase business confidence and generate one million jobs a year.

"We have spent more on human capital formation than ever in the past. Why? Because if government of the people and by the people is not for them as well, it is a mockery of democracy," Ms Arroyo said.

Cheaper medicines

She said she would put investments for a "stronger and wider social safety net," by providing cheaper medicines, affordable housing, quality education, and more teachers, classrooms and books, and improving public health and English competency of students.

"Third, investments in bringing peace to Mindanao; in crushing terrorism wherever it threatens regardless of ideology; and in putting a stop to human rights abuses whatever the excuse," Ms Arroyo said.

She paid tribute to the 14 Marines killed by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Basilan while they were looking for kidnapped Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi.

Ms Arroyo said the plight of the poor improved during her term, saying it was the first time PhilHealth gave P3 billion in health insurance for the poor.

"What I have outlined today is just a sampler of our P1.7-trillion Medium Term Public Investment Program. How will we fund all these? P1 trillion from state revenues, with tax reforms and firm orders to the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Customs to hit their targets. P300 billion from state corporations.

The balance from government financial institutions, private sector investments, local government equity and our bilateral and multilateral partners," she said.

The President presented a number of successful agrarian reform beneficiaries and students who won international tilts in her feel-good speech.

Her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, attended the Sona in his first public appearance since undergoing a dangerous open heart surgery on April 9.

Spreading cheer

As though on a campaign mode, Ms Arroyo adopted a conciliatory approach to politicians.

"We are spreading the cheer across the political spectrum from Vic Ortega to Caloy Padilla. We put the nation first, and putting politics aside," she said.

Ms Arroyo also acknowledged a beaming Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno, who last week led an unprecedented summit on extrajudicial killings hounding the Arroyo administration.

"It is the first time that a Chief Justice attended (the Sona)," she said.

GMA takes country on tour of super regions

From page A1

five super regions—the North Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle, the Metro Luzon Urban Beltway, Central Philippines and Mindanao, and the Cyber Corridor which would span the entire length of the archipelago through Information Technology—were crucial to her vision of the Philippines becoming a First World country in 20 years.

By 2010, the Philippines should be well on its way to achieving that vision, she said.

The President said infrastructure, such as airports, roads, bridges, public parks and power plants, were the pillars not only of a peaceful nation but of a modern economy.

"Last year, I unveiled the super regions ... to spread development away from an inequitable concentration in Metro Manila. Manila is not the Philippines," she said.

Blueprint

"The super regions was not a gimmick for the occasion but the blueprint for building a future," she said.

First in the super regions tour was Mindanao which, she said, had the potential to become the nation's "food basket," thus the need for the government to prioritize agribusiness investments.

"And I am happy to see that the latest survey in June shows the hunger rate has sharply gone down nationwide. We have done that," she said.

The departments of agriculture, agrarian reform, and environment would devote 30 percent of their budgets to Mindanao, she said, adding that the office of the Department of Agrarian Reform would be moved to Davao.

"We want better airports, new bridges and ample energy for Mindanao's rising economy," she said.

Saying "construction is crisscrossing Mindanao," she then enumerated the projects requested by her allies:

- Besides providing irrigation to a million hectares of farmlands, the government intends to build mariculture in Sibutu, Tawi-tawi, as requested by Rep. Nur Jaafar.

"Dapitan-Dakak to bring Cely Carreon's paradise closer to civilization; Sibuco-Siraway-Siocon-Baliguian; Dinagat Island Network, a baptismal gift for Glenda Ecleo's new province; the 66-kilometer Manay-Mati section of Davao-Surigao; and Maguindanao-Lebak, Sim Datumanong's brainchild when he headed the Department of Public Works and Highways."

- Of the P3-billion spent for 3,000 km of farm-to-market roads, 1,000 km are earmarked for Mindanao.

"The Dipolog and Pagadian airports will be improved by year's end. Also the Cotabato airport. No doubt eagerly awaited by Au Cerilles, Rolando Yebes, Digs Dilangalen, Ros Labadlabad and Victor Yu, and Mayors Evelyn Uy and Sammy Co," the President said.

- P1.7-billion, a 900-meter bridge in Butuan built on the initiative of Mayor Boy Daku Plaza, near the P4-billion second-generation flood control project that the government also built.
- In Agusan del Norte, "I hope Edel Amante will be happy with our plans to pilot micro agribusiness in Jabonga," she said.

Pork with good cholesterol

- Opening of Ozamiz airport on July 8, "bankrolled partly by Leo Ocampos, Aldo Parojinog and Ramiro's congressional fund. Now, that's the kind of pork that has good cholesterol."

"On that occasion the MOU was signed for the Pangil Bay Bridge that will connect Ozamiz to Lanao del Norte and Iligan. As urged by Bobby Dimaporo, I declared Mt. Inayawan Range a protected nature park. On Mayor Lawrence Cruz's recommendation, I instruct DPWH to build the Iligan Circumferential Road."

- In 2001, opened a solar plant in Cagayan de Oro, but to address a 100-megawatt gap by 2009, a 210-megawatt clean coal plant in Phividec will be built.
- 160,000 hectares of Jatropha nurseries in Bukidnon and 30,000 hectares in General Santos courtesy of Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Rep. Miguel Zubiri, who sponsored the Biofuels Law in the 13th Congress.

Tourism super region

Moving to the Visayas, the President envisioned it to be the tourism super region.

- For Boracay, the leading overall destination, the Kalibo Airport is now international with an instrument landing system year. Next to be built is an P80-million terminal on the request of Joben Miraflores, Ms Arroyo said.
- The Aklan-Libertad-Pandan Road, which is waiting for Japan to approve the contractors, will connect Boracay to the nature park declared in Northwest Panay Peninsula; improvement of the other Panay roads and building of the road from the Iloilo Airport and the Metro Radial Road that Iloilo Mayor Jerry Trenas asked for.

"Art Defensor conceived the airport when he was governor, Governor Neil Tupaz midwifed its delivery when we inaugurated the airport," she said.

- The other side of the Guimaras island will connect to Bacolod soon via the Sibunag Ro-ro Port on recommendation of Governor, now Congressman, Rahman Nava.
- Bacolod-Silay Airport, near the nature park declared in Northern Negros, is completed and just awaiting the access road requested by Rep. Monico Puentavella.
- Awarded the contract for upgrading the Dumaguete airport as she reported to George Arnaiz last week.
- For Palawan, after the Puerto Princesa-Roxas Road last year, opening of the Taytay-El Nido in March, while the construction of the P1-billion Taytay-Roxas section is ongoing; San Vicente airstrip and Busuanga Airport are under construction.

"And Mayor Hagedorn is reminding us to work on the Puerto Princesa terminal," she said.

- Under construction are airport aprons of the surfing edens: Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone's pet project in Guiuan and Lalo Matugas' home town in Siargao.

In Central Cebu, the top destination for foreign tourists, Ms Arroyo said Cebu would connect to Tubigon and on to Ubay, Jagna and Panglao through the Bohol Circumferential Road inaugurated on May 9.

The local government has acquired 85 percent of the land for the international airport on Panglao Island, now a tourism destination of its own, she reported.

"Ubay links to Maasin Roro Port which was completed last October. Jagna Roro Port opened last May 9. It will connect to Loloy Romualdo's Mambajao in November, and on to Guinsiliban, the gateway to Mindanao," she said.

Going north from Cebu City, motorists can take the North Coastal Road to Daanbantayan which was recommended by Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia.

The President expected heavy traffic to ease when the P1.2-billion Mandaue-Consolacion Bridge opens.

For Masbate, Esperanza will link by road to Aroroy in 2009. "I'll be there with Lina Seachon and Tony Kho for the inauguration. Please invite me," she said.

"Last May, I switched on the lights of Masbate in a Palace ceremony. But the long-term solution will come next year when a new power plant will serve half a million customers on the beautiful but isolated island of Masbate," Ms Arroyo added.

She mentioned Roro, watershed, irrigation, flood control and water conservation projects for Bicol.

Congress urged to pass laws to end political killings

From page A1

"It is never right and always wrong to fight terror with terror," the President said.

Ms Arroyo called on Congress "to transform state response to political violence" by passing laws to protect witnesses from lawbreakers and law enforcers, and laws to guarantee swift justice through special courts.

"Third, laws to impose harsher penalties for political killings. Fourth, laws reserving the harshest penalties for the rogue elements in the uniformed services who betray the public trust and bring shame to the greater number of their colleagues who are patriotic," Ms Arroyo said.

She also enjoined Congress to prescribe heavier penalties for election killings.

"We can disagree on political goals but never on the conduct of democratic elections. I ask Congress to fund poll watchdogs. And to enact a stronger law against election-related violence," she said.

Ms Arroyo said the country would fight terrorism since it threatened the country's sovereign, democratic, compassionate and decent way of life.

Fearless 14

"We pay tribute to the fearless 14 who were savagely massacred at Tipo-Tipo trying to pursue a peaceful and progressive Philippines," Ms Arroyo said, referring to the July 10 ambush of Marines in Basilan.

"We will not disappoint their hopes. We will not waste their sacrifice. We will not be swayed from the course we have set in this conflict for peace with justice throughout our land," she said.

Ms Arroyo said the Philippines had built a world model for reconciliation built on interfaith dialogue, complemented with expanded public works and more responsive social services.

"These investments show both sides in the Mindanao conflict that they have more at stake in common; and a greater reason to be together than hang apart, including being together isolating the terrorists," she said.

Antiterror law

Ms Arroyo said the new antiterror law must be used against terrorists who threaten vital infrastructure in Mindanao.

"Mindanao's energy challenge lies not in generating power but in power lines. Terrorists target transmission towers. We must resolutely apply the Human Security Act," Ms Arroyo said.

Ms Arroyo spoke amid mounting international criticism of extrajudicial killings of leftist dissidents, many of them linked by the military to a long-running communist insurgency.

Local human rights groups say more than 800 leftist activists have been murdered since Ms Arroyo took office in 2001 (the INQUIRER count is 299). The military says the number is exaggerated as some of the dead were communist guerrillas killed in armed clashes.

A UN envoy and an independent government commission have both identified military elements in many of the killings.

Executive action needed

Reacting to the President's address, Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casino told the INQUIRER. "The biggest thing needed is executive action."

Rep. Satur Ocampo, also from the militant Bayan Muna, noted that Ms Arroyo's Sona "ignored" the recommendation that she come out with a categorical order to stop members of the police and military purportedly behind the extrajudicial killings.

Sen. Manuel Roxas II said he was disappointed with the President's statement, saying "I would have wanted to see a much more clear directive."

He said that he wanted a "directive from her to the military and police that as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive she would not stand for more of these extrajudicial killings." *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra, Dona Z. Pazzibugan, AFP*

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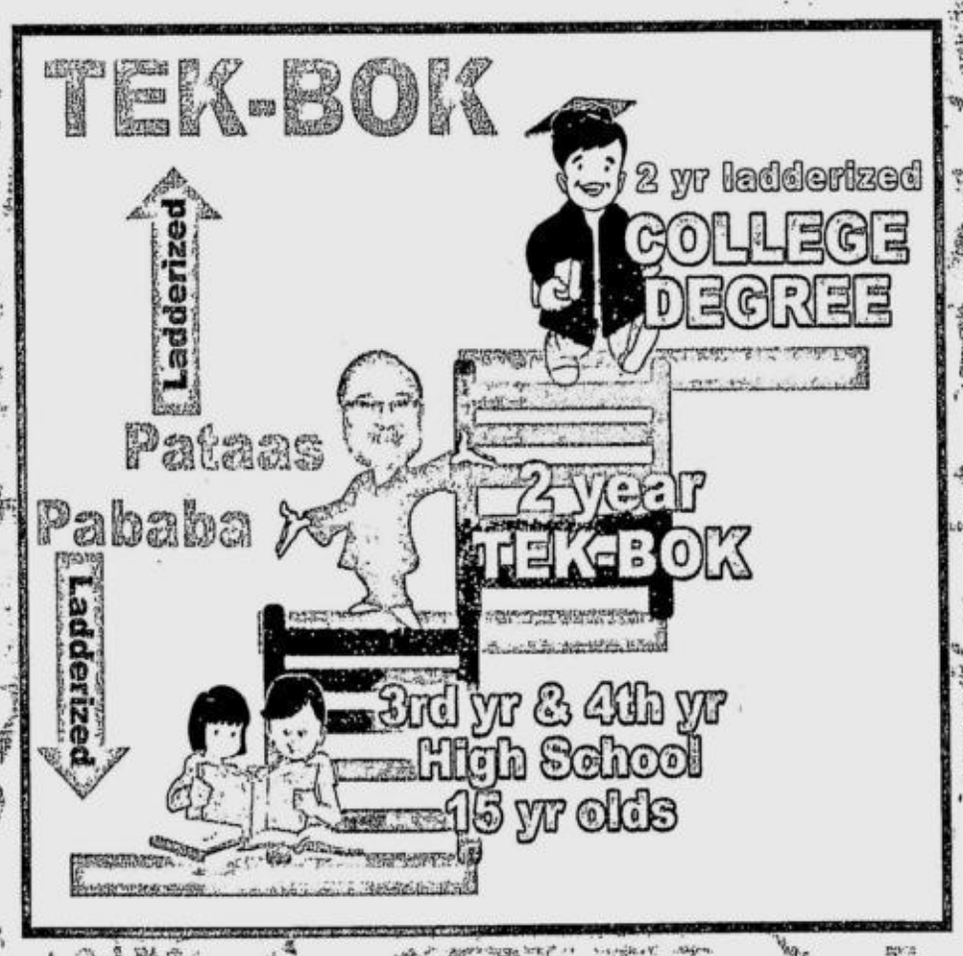

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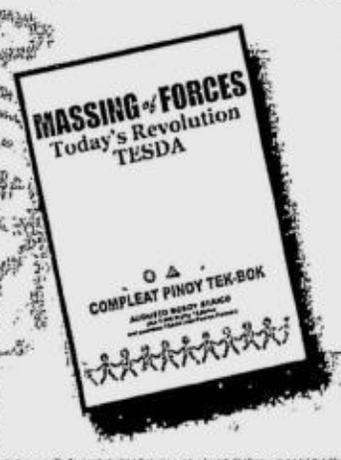

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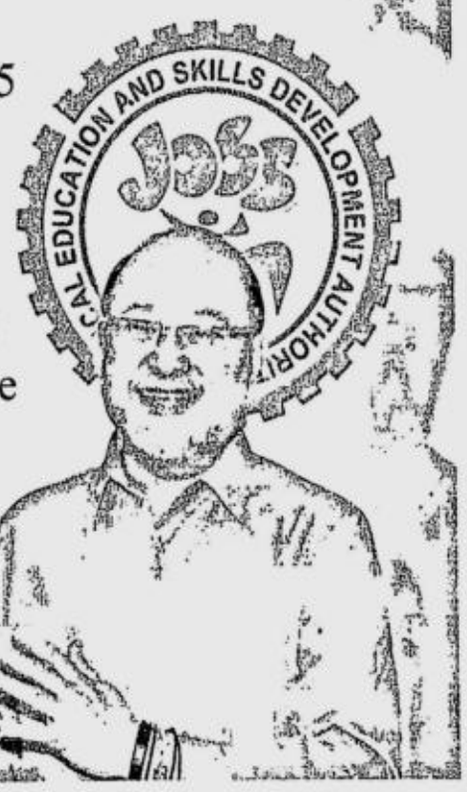

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DID YOU KNOW

TODAY, July 24, is the 117th birth anniversary of sculptor Guillermo Tolentino, who was born in Malolos, Bulacan. Many of his works are found in Metro Manila, like the Bonifacio Monument in Caloocan City, the Oblation at UP Diliman and the bronze figure of former President Manuel L. Quezon at the Quezon Memorial Circle. Tolentino was named a National Artist in 1973. He died in 1976, and was the first National Artist to be given a state funeral. He was also the first civilian to be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

2 kids allegedly battered by parents dead

Concerned neighbors witness abusive acts vs victims in Pasig

By Kristine L. Alave

TWO CHILDREN, AGED NINE AND THREE, died at the hands of their parents in separate incidents in Barangay Maybunga, Pasig City over the weekend, police said yesterday.

In both cases, the boys' neighbors banded together to file complaints against the parents of the victims.

The 9-year-old boy, identified as Fernando Alabado, fell down the stairs on Sunday evening. Neighbors accused his parents, Mary Anne Soriano and her live-in partner, Gregorio Oroseo, of maltreating the boy.

The family lived on West Bank Road, Floodway, Barangay Maybunga, reports said.

Around Sunday midnight, the family's next door neighbor, Marilyn Baarde, 29, said she was standing on the street when she heard a loud thud from Soriano's house.

Unconscious

When she peeked inside the house, Baarde said she saw Alabado sprawled at the foot of the stairs, unconscious and with his hands tied.

Baarde said she and her siblings rushed the boy to the Pasig City General Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

In their sworn statements to the police, Baarde and the family's other neighbors said Soriano and Oroseo regularly beat up the boy.

"The boy always had bruises in different parts of his body," Nenita Encenas, another neighbor, told the police.

Soriano was charged with parricide yesterday while Oroseo is facing child abuse charges in the Pasig City Office of the Prosecutor, PO1 Clifford Hipolito, the investigating officer, said.

Autopsy

Hipolito said the police would order an autopsy on the child's body to find out the cause of death.

Last Saturday, Bryan Gonzales, a 3-year-old from the same village, died after his mother allegedly slammed his head against the wall.

Neighbors who went to the Pasig City police yesterday morning accused the boy's mother, Michelle Gonzales, 22, of abusing the boy and killing him.

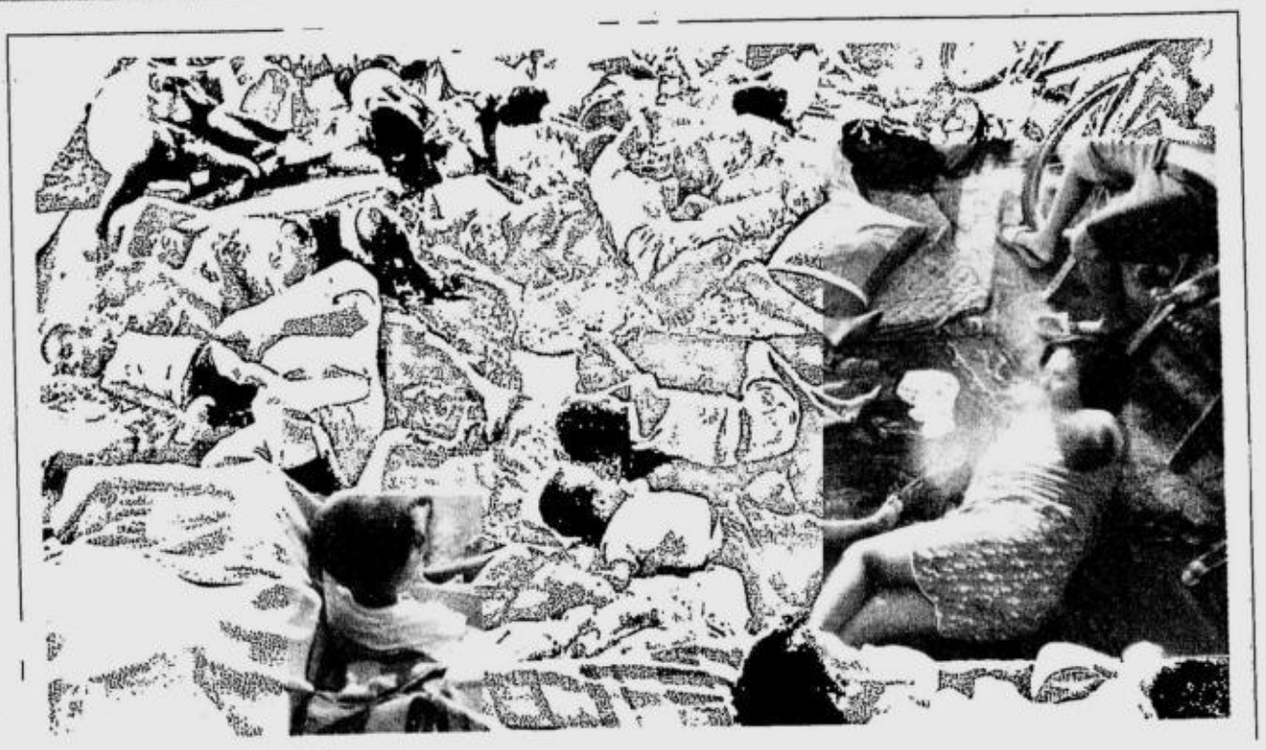
Jocelyn Lansang, Gonzales' neighbor, said Bryan's mother resented him and would often hit him.

According to Lansang, at about 11 a.m. Saturday, she saw Gonzales force the boy to eat. But when Bryan refused, the mother allegedly got angry at her son and repeatedly slammed the boy's head against a wall. In a tearful account, Lansang said she saw the boy go into convulsions and die on the spot.

Lansang told the INQUIRER that she and other neighbors had previously warned Gonzales against beating her son.

But Lansang said Gonzales returned to her old ways. The neighbor said the suspect resented the boy after his father left her.

The Pasig City police has sent investigators to Gonzales' house to determine her liability in her son's death.



TEMPORARY HOME
Residents of Soldier Hills in Muntinlupa City find temporary shelter in a basketball court after yesterday's fire that destroyed about 50 houses.
RAFFY LERMA

Suspected NPA member killed in shootout

By Kristine L. Alave

A SUSPECTED MEMBER OF THE NEW PEOple's Army was killed yesterday in an early morning firefight with members of the Philippine National Police Special Action Force in Rizal province.

Supt. Freddie Panen, chief of the Rizal police, told the INQUIRER that the chance encounter occurred at Sitio Lubog, Rodriguez town at about 5 a.m.

About 15 SAF policemen were on routine patrol in the area when they met a band of armed men in the hilly area, triggering a 30-minute firefight, Panen said.

Panen said police forces killed one of the suspected rebels who has yet to be identified. They also recovered an M1 Garand rifle, ammunition, and several empty shells for an M79 grenade launcher. No casualties were reported on the side of the government troops.

Panen said that they were conducting hot pursuit operations against the suspected rebels. He noted that the police had sighted the group near the boundary of Bulacan province.

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New school building for Sta. Cruz students

By Allison W. Lopez

A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING MADE OF CONcrete will be built in place of the wooden structure that burned down Sunday at the Francisco Balagtas Elementary School on Alvarez Street in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

"The construction work will be done by phases and the funding may come from both the city and the national government," said Ma. Luisa Quiñones, head of the Division of City Schools.

Quiñones added that Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim already ordered the City Engineer's Office to make the plans for the new building, apart from clearing the site of debris.

Officials of the City Engineer's Office visited the school yesterday and declared two other school buildings —Habana 2 and Maceda—which were unaffected by the fire as "safe for occupancy," according to Quiñones.

"There is no problem about where the students will be housed because we have two more buildings," she said.

Grade 5 and 6 students, however, will hold classes at the nearby M. Hizon Elementary School.

Francisco Balagtas Elementary School has about 3,000 students.

On the other hand, classes at Teodora Alonzo High School, located beside the elementary school and which also caught on fire Sunday, will not be disrupted.

The high school has 1,858 students.

Arson investigators were still looking into the cause of the fire which began at the elementary school, Quiñones said.

ANOTHER FERRY STATION OPENS
Commuters can now ride on the Pasig River ferry at the newly opened station near the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Sta. Mesa, Manila. The other stations are in Escolta and Sta. Cruz in Manila, Lambingan and Hulo in Mandaluyong and Guadalupe in Makati. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Games machines patronized by students torched by Lim

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM YESTERDAY led local officials in the burning of 59 units of "video karera" and fruit games machines as part of his campaign against disruptive activities patronized by the youth.

With Lim at the Bonifacio Shrine where the machines seized by the MPD's various units were set on fire was Manila Police District (MPD) acting director Danilo Abarzosa.

Last week, the mayor ordered the banning of students from playing computer games in shops near their schools during class hours.

He said concerned parents have called for an immediate stop to activities that distracted their children that often times caused them to skip their classes or use up their allowance.

Lim also praised the MPD chief for the arrest of suspected drug pusher Ismael Ibrahim Elid.

The suspect was caught over the weekend with about 400 grams of shabu valued at P1.3M.

Elid, a native of Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, was apprehended by Station 8 operatives at the corner of Rawatun and Palanca Streets in San Miguel, Manila.

Station 8 commander Chief Insp. Ganaban Ali said the arrest was a result of a week-long surveillance of the alleged rampant illegal drug trade on Palanca Street.

Policemen immediately spotted Elid in the area clutching a plastic bag, and gave chase when the suspect decided to flee from his captors.

After he was cornered, plastic sachets containing the illegal drug were reportedly found inside the suspect's bag.

As charges were being readied against Elid, Lim ordered the MPD to go after the "big fish," or those supporting the suspect's operations.

Bank security system a must, says EPD head

By Kristine L. Alave

EAST METRO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS have been urged to pass laws that would require banks to install cameras and other security equipment inside and outside their establishments.

Eastern Police District Director Chief Supt. Luizo Ticman said this system would speed up the identification of robbers.

At present, not all banks have a closed circuit television system that monitors activities both inside and outside the establishments, he added.

Ticman said local governments should also compel banks to improve their security and alarm systems, adding that city councils could pass an ordinance to this effect. Those who fail to comply with the requirement should not be given a business permit, he added.

East Metro has been the scene of a series of robberies recently.

Deputy Director General Reynaldo Varilla, head of the National Capital Region Police Office, also ordered the city's police districts to establish a desk that would solve bank robbery complaints and conduct operations against syndicates.

He also ordered the activation of the Anti-Bank Robbery Special Operations Task Force to oversee the progress of the project after bank officials expressed their dismay over the failure of police authorities to pursue cases and arrest suspects of bank robberies.

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The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation *("PSALM")* Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee (the *"Committee"*), in accordance with Section 21 of RA 9136, the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001" (the *"EPIRA"*), invites interested parties to participate in, pre-qualify and bid for the:

Privatization By Way of Concession Of The Facilities and Assets of the National Transmission Corporation

(the *"Transco Privatization"*). The Transco Privatization is through open competitive bidding.

Interested parties are required to submit an Expression of Interest ("EOI") to PSALM which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of each interested party, name of the principal contact and signed by an authorized representative of each interested party. All EOIs must be received by PSALM at the PSALM Office, 7th Floor Bankmer Building 6756 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on 24 August, 2007 (the *"EOI Submission Deadline"*). Only interested parties that submit an EOI by the EOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the Transco Privatization. A party may express interest in behalf of another party, provided that it will state that it is acting in behalf of another party. The identity of the actual party must be disclosed no later than the submission of the Pre-qualification Proposal.

As a prerequisite to the (i) receipt of the bidding package (the *"Bidding Package"*) that includes the procedures for bidding for the Transco Privatization (the *"Bidding Procedures"*), (ii) the draft transaction documents, (iii) conduct of due diligence, and (iv) submission of a pre-qualification proposal, interested parties must execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of the EPIRA, in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S. $5,000.000) (the *"Participation Fee"*). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Bidding Package shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 01 August 2007 until the Pre-qualification Proposal Submission Deadline (indicated below).

Among the bidding activities are: Due Diligence to commence on 01 August 2007; Pre-qualification Proposal Submission Deadline of 5:00 p.m. on 21 September 2007; Pre-bid Conference at 2:00 p.m. on 05 November 2007 at the PSALM Office; and Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM at 10:00 a.m. on 12 December 2007. References to dates and times shall be based on Manila time, unless otherwise stated, all venues shall be at the PSALM office. Should any of the above dates fall on a public holiday in Makati City, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City. The dates and times of other important milestones are contained in the Bidding Procedures.

Interested parties and consortia should note that EPIRA provides that the Concessionaire "shall be financially and technically capable, with proven domestic and/or international experience and expertise as a leading transmission system operator and that such experience must be with a transmission system of comparable capacity and coverage as the Philippines". The detailed pre-qualification criteria are contained in the Bidding Procedures. Only parties who have pre-qualified will be allowed to attend the Pre-bid Conference, and submit a technical proposal and a financial bid for the Transco Privatization, as outlined in the Bidding Procedures. Pre-qualified bidders will be required to post a Thirty Million U.S. Dollar (U.S.$ 30,000,000.00) bid bond in the form of an irrevocable confirmed standby letter of credit together with the submission of Bids. The amount and other details of the bid bond are contained in the Bidding Procedures. The bid bond of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security in accordance with the transaction documents to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction documents. A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Other details of the Transco Privatization, including the submission of audited financial statements and income tax return, the deadline for the formation of consortia and other deadlines, are contained in the Bidding Procedures. The terms of the concession are contained in the draft transaction documents and shall be finalized in accordance with the Bidding Procedures.

Expressions of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 7th Floor Bankmer Building, 6756 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at tele/fax (632) 892-6029 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party, consortia or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines in accordance with the Bidding Procedures. The Committee reserves the right to modify, supplement, change, suspend or terminate the privatization process at any time, including the Bidding Procedures, schedule and the venue provided therein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) RAPHAEL PERPETUO M. LOTILLA
Chairman
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–July 23, 24 & 25, 2007)

What the gov't did to release Bossi is its own business

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

CATHOLIC BISHOPS SAY THEY DON'T condone the government solution that led to the release of Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi: kidnapping the relatives of the kidnappers and holding them as pawns.

C'mon, what the government did—if it did as was reported in the news—is no longer your business!

You should be thankful Father Bossi is now safe and sound. Period.

What's wrong with you is that you interfere in purely government affairs, like how a kidnapping victim should be rescued.

* * *

The "kidnap for kidnap" gambit should also have been used in the kidnapping of some guests of the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan three years ago.

Among those kidnapped were a vacationing American, who was beheaded later, and American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham. Martin, along with a Filipino nurse, was killed during a rescue operation by government troops.

This columnist was among those who advocated kidnapping close relatives of the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers to make them release their hostages.

But government negotiators rejected the strategy outright. Why?

Because I found later, through some negotiators themselves, that the strategy was not used because it was illegal or immoral but because some of the negotiators benefited from the ransom money.

If you doubt my statement, you should ask some of the Abu Sayyaf captives who received the ransom money. The Abu Sayyaf, for example, would ask for a certain amount of ransom for a particular kidnap victim. The negotiators would double or triple the original ransom demand and would keep the rest.

I wouldn't be surprised if some of those unscrupulous negotiators would find themselves or their relatives kidnapped sooner or later.

No karmic debt on earth ever goes unpaid.

* * *

The government is barking up the wrong tree if it keeps on insisting that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) turn over the persons who beheaded and mutilated the dead Marines who were ambushed in Basilan.

As I've said in my previous column, the men of Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar were allegedly responsible for the dastardly and inhuman deed.

Yes, MILF rebels did ambush the Marines, in conspiracy with Akbar's men, but they had no part in the beheading and mutilation of the dead Marines.

Why is the government so afraid of Akbar? I can only surmise: If Akbar starts opening his mouth a lot of people in the government would be red in the face.

The congressman and former governor might reveal the people in the government who allegedly benefited from Abu Sayyaf ransom payments for the Dos Palmas victims.

Or, he might pinpoint the source of the 800 pieces of M-14 and M-16 rifles that were delivered to him before the last election.

* * *

There's probably more to the mass escape at the Basilan provincial jail last week than meets the eye.

Some of the escapees were Abu Sayyaf bandits involved in heinous crimes like kidnapping and murder.

Could it be that the escape was part of the negotiations for the release of Father Bossi?

* * *

The importer of the White Rabbit candy from China is Candyman, the company that manufactures White Rabbit candy in the Philippines.

White Rabbit from China has been found by the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) to have formalin, a chemical used for embalming. Formalin supposedly prolongs the shelf life of goods.

White Rabbit made in the Philippines should also be checked for formalin by the BFAD.

Antidengue drive intensified in Taguig City barangays

By Julie M. Aurelio

AS DENGUE CASES RISE IN METRO Manila, Taguig City Mayor Freddie R. Tiñga has ordered local health officials to intensify the campaign against the mosquito-borne disease.

Tiñga said he directed the City Health Office to launch a city-wide information campaign for the prevention of dengue fever.

"We need to make sure that everyone is well informed on how to prevent the breeding of dengue-carrying mosquitoes because, as in all cases of diseases, prevention is the key," Tiñga said.

He added that contrary to reports that dengue cases in the city rose by 200 percent, there were only 72 confirmed cases from January to July 10 this year, 65 percent higher compared with the 47 cases reported during the same period in 2006.

Taguig City ranks eighth among the cities in Metro Manila with the biggest number of dengue cases. The top five are Manila (385), Quezon City (363), Caloocan (135), Pasig (131) and Malabon (116).

Last week, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III visited the city to launch the "4S" of dengue prevention: search and destroy (disease-carrying mosquitoes), seek immediate treatment, self-protection and say "no" to indiscriminate fogging.

Tiñga said local health officials are now in close coordination with barangay officials to boost public awareness and effectively arrest the increase in the number of dengue cases in the city.

City Health Officer Dr. Rolando Paac said people who show symptoms of dengue should go to the health centers in Barangays Upper Bicutan and Tuktukan and to the Taguig-Pateros District Hospital, where they will be tested for the disease.

"Our barangay health workers have been tasked to make the rounds to look for children who may be down with fever. We have our ambulances ready to pick them up for free platelets testing, too," Paac said.

METROBRIEFS

Fire hits ex-cop's house

THE HOUSE of a former police official in Caloocan City burned down at dawn yesterday, causing over P2 million worth of damage. Arson investigator SFO2 Arvin David said the house on Road 7, GSIS Hills Subdivision, Talipapa was owned by former Philippine Constabulary Col. Roberto Abad. No one was hurt in the fire which, according to David, was caused by electrical overload and started in the kitchen at around 3:01 a.m. It was put out an hour later. *Nancy Carvajal*

Angry guard kills 2 men

ANGERED by his drinking partners' insults, a security guard killed his two coworkers yesterday in Taguig City. Boy Ronald Antonio was later arrested with the murder weapons still in his possession: a knife and a cal. .38 revolver. The victims were identified as Danilo Alinio and Charlie Consorte, his fellow security guards at the Star Packaging Corp. on Bagong Calzada St. in Barangay Ususan. The three were having a few drinks at around 1 a.m. yesterday when the victims started insulting him, the suspect told the police. He stabbed Alinio 14 times and then shot Consorte repeatedly. Murder charges will be filed against the victim who is detained at the Taguig City police station. *Julie M. Aurelio*

US to stick with harsh grillings, says spymaster

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States will persist with techniques of interrogating terror suspects that have saved "countless lives," but will stop short of torture, the top US spymaster said Sunday.

Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell refused to spell out whether methods such as the alleged practice of "waterboarding" were permitted under a new executive order of President George W. Bush.

"The United States does not engage in torture. This executive order spells it out," McConnell said on NBC television.

But he indicated that the implied threat of torture had reaped dividends in extracting life-saving information from detainees.

"And so this is a program where we capture someone known to be a terrorist, we need information that they possess, and it has saved countless lives," McConnell said, without detailing any plots that might have been broken up.

"Because they believe these techniques might involve torture and they don't understand them, they tend to speak to us in a very candid way."

Under his order issued on Friday, Bush forbade the Central Intelligence Agency to torture suspected terrorists in its detention and interrogation program instituted after the Sept. 11 attacks of 2001.

The order says that the CIA program, confirmed to exist in September 2006, must abide by the Geneva Conventions on wartime detainees and directs the CIA director to enforce that standard.

It lists no specific practices that are affected, or punishments for violations, and does not describe in any further detail a secret CIA prison network that has drawn outrage from US allies in Europe.

Human rights groups said the executive order left out critical details, such as controversial tactics that administration officials often describe as "enhanced interrogation techniques."

Those are said by critics and former detainees to include waterboarding, or simulated drowning, sleep deprivation, prolonged captivity in "stress positions" and sexual humiliation.

Bush spokesperson Tony Snow said the order barred "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment" and "acts of violence serious enough to be considered comparable to murder, torture, mutilation, and cruel and inhuman treatment."

McConnell said that he had been "quite frankly appalled" at the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US guards at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib jail. "My view was America risked losing the moral high ground."

But that was not a program administered by the CIA, and it was "not the program that the president approved in the recent executive order."

Fewer than 100 people have been subject to enhanced interrogations, and they were kept under medical supervision and "not abused in any way," McConnell added.

However, Human Rights Watch slammed Bush's new order as "contrary to the Geneva Conventions" because it essentially affirmed CIA secret detentions, a program which is "illegal to its core," according to a statement.

"The key aspect of this is all the parts that aren't said," added Jennifer Daskal, HRW senior counterterrorism counsel, who charged that the order allowed "a system of incommunicado detention to continue, with the blessing of the president."

"What we have here is an administration basically reciting a number of legal principles and saying 'trust us.' And that's hard to take from an administration that refuses to renounce waterboarding," she said.

CIA director Michael Hayden told employees in a statement that the order was necessary to ensure that detentions and interrogations were in step with recent US Supreme Court rulings. *AFP*

Turkey's ruling party scores big poll win

ISTANBUL, TURKEY—THE ISLAMic-inspired governing party of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan won a larger-than-expected victory in nationwide parliamentary elections on Sunday, taking close to half the total vote in a stinging rebuke to Turkey's old guard.

With nearly all the votes counted, Erdogan's Justice and Development Party won 46.6 percent of the vote, according to Turkish election officials, far more than the 34 percent the party garnered in the last election, in 2002.

The secular state establishment had expected that voters would punish Erdogan's party for promoting an Islamic agenda. But the main secular party. The Republican People's Party, received just 20.9 percent, compared with 19 percent in the last election. The Nationalist Action Party, which played on fears of ethnic Kurdish separatism, won 14.3 percent, officials said.

The result was also a broad mandate for Erdogan's party, with large numbers of voters sending the message that they do not feel it is a threat to Turkish democracy. It fell short, however, of getting the two-thirds majority needed to amend the constitution.

Turkey is a Nato member and a strong American ally, positions Erdogan has emphatically affirmed, and its stability is crucial in a troubled region.

Erdogan, whose party is known by its Turkish initials, AK, savored the victory. But he also struck a conciliatory tone.

"Our nation certified the AK Party as the central power of the society," he said in a nationally televised speech.

"I'm calling on our other citizens who didn't make their choices in support of AK. I also understand the message you sent in ballot boxes. We respect your choices. We consider your different choices as the richness of your democratic life."

Erdogan's party has pushed for European Union membership. It has strengthened economic ties with Israel and has broached the topic of Turkey's problems with its Kurdish minority. *NYT*

ERDOGAN AP

UK Air Force intercepts Russian bombers

LONDON—ROYAL AIR FORCE fighter jets were scrambled to intercept two Russian bombers heading for British airspace, The Times said on Wednesday, prompting fierce denials of brinkmanship from Moscow.

The newspaper said two RAF Tornados from its rapid reaction force took off from RAF base Leeming in northern England to confront the two Tu95 "Bear" bombers after they were shadowed by F-16s from the Royal Norwegian Air Force.

An unnamed RAF spokesperson was quoted as saying that the Russian bombers, based near the northern port city of Murmansk in the Arctic Circle, turned back before they reached British airspace.

The Times, which said the incident happened on Tuesday, said there was no evidence to suggest it was linked to Britain's planned expulsion of four diplomats over Russia's stance on the Alexander Litvinenko affair.

Russia on Tuesday promised a "targeted and appropriate" response to Britain's move, prompted by Moscow's refusal to extradite an ex-KGB agent suspected of poisoning the outspoken dissident in London last year.

But the daily said it smacked of "old-fashioned sabre-rattling" on the part of the Russian military and revived "the spirit of the Cold War" in the North Atlantic.

No one at the defense ministry in London was immediately available for comment when contacted by AFP but there were swift denials from Russia.

Air Force Col. Alexander Drobyshevsky was quoted by the news agency Interfax as saying: "Claims that Russian bombers were headed for British airspace don't correspond with reality.

"Long-distance planes were making planned flights over international waters. These kind of flights have been and are carried out to train long-distance flight crews." *AFP*

BRITISH author J.K. Rowling presenting her novel "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" on July 20. AFP

Final Harry Potter is richest book

NEW YORK—IT IS THE RICHEST going-away party in history.

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," the seventh and final volume of J.K. Rowling's all-conquering fantasy series, sold a mountainous 8.3 million copies in its first 24 hours on sale in the United States, according to Scholastic Inc.

The book's British publisher, Bloomsbury, expects to announce sales figures on Monday.

Earlier on Sunday, Borders Group Inc. reported that the book sold 1.2 million copies worldwide in its first day, the biggest single-day number ever for the superstore chain. According to Borders, the previous Potter, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," sold 850,000 copies on its first day of release in 2005.

No other book, not even any of the six previous Potters, has been so desired, so quickly. "Deathly Hallows" averaged more than 300,000 copies in sales per hour—more than 50,000 a minute. It generated more than $250 million of revenue, more than triple the opening weekend take for the latest Potter movie, "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," which came out July 10.

"The excitement, anticipation, and just plain hysteria that came over the entire country this weekend was a bit like the Beatles' first visit to the US," Scholastic president Lisa Holton said in a statement Sunday about US sales.

"This weekend kids and adults alike are sitting on buses, in the park, on airplanes and in restaurants reading 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.' The conversations the readers have been waiting to have for 10 years have just begun."

The numbers are astonishing, but not shocking. "Deathly Hallows" was designed to break records, released on Saturday with a first printing of 12 million in the US alone, although Scholastic spokesperson Kyle Good acknowledged that some stores already were out of copies.

"Our distribution strategy was clearly right on target in order to sell 8.3 million copies in 24 hours," she told The Associated Press. "We are working with retailers to move additional copies to the places they are needed most in the coming days and weeks."

Both Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble announced that preorders exceeded one million. In a truly Beatles-esque moment, seven of the top bestsellers on Amazon were Potter-related Sunday, including the audio CD of "Deathly Hallows" and a box set of all seven Potters coming out in September.

"Deathly Hallows" was so popular that Hollywood studio Warner Bros. acknowledged it took away business from "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," the fifth Potter movie, because fans were too busy.

Reviews for "Deathly Hallows" have been almost universally ecstatic, and reader enthusiasm apparently intact despite, prerelease "spoilers" that proliferated on the Internet. *AP*

Hackers can take control of iPhone, says firm

A TEAM OF COMPUTER SECURITY consultants says it has found a flaw in Apple's popular new iPhone that allows it to take control of the device.

The researchers, working for Independent Security Evaluators, said that they could take control of iPhones through a WiFi connection or by tricking users into going to a website that contains a malicious code.

Although Apple built considerable security measures into its device, said Charles A. Miller, the principal security analyst for the firm, "once you did manage to find a hole, you were in complete control." The firm, based in Baltimore, alerted Apple about the vulnerability this week and recommended a software patch that could solve the problem.

A spokesperson for Apple, Lynn Fox, said, "Apple takes security very seriously and has a great track record of addressing potential vulnerabilities before they can affect users."

"We're looking into the report submitted by ISE and always welcome feedback on how to improve our security," she said.

The company said there was no evidence that this flaw had been exploited or that users had been affected, and it knew of no other exploits of this nature.

Miller, a former employee of the National Security Agency who has a doctorate in computer science, demonstrated the hack to a reporter by using his iPhone's Web browser to visit a website of his own design.

Once he was there, the site injected a bit of code into the iPhone that then took over the phone. The phone promptly followed instructions to transmit a set of files to the attacking computer that included recent text messages—including one that had been sent to the reporter's cell phone moments before—as well as telephone contacts and e-mail addresses.

"We can get any file we want," he said. *NYT*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS. INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Wenxing Tan	Consultant
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS. INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Cheng Tao	Product Manager
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS. INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Yongzhi Liu	Consultant
EDUGATE INCORPORATED 320 2C East Tower, PSE Ctr. Exchange Rd., Pasig City	Minjung Bang	Call Center Technology Analyst
GLOBE MART Unit 2002 Pioneer Highland Condo., Pioneer cor. Madison Sts., Mandaluyong City	So Jin Park	Inventory Control Officer
GLOBE MART Unit 2002 Pioneer Highland Condo., Pioneer cor. Madison Sts., Mandaluyong City	Mi Ja Jung (w/o Park)	Accounts Receivable Manager
NO. 1 ACTIVITY NETWORK SYSTEM (NANS), INC. Unit 22pc Eisenhower Condominium, # 7 Eisenhower St., San Juan City	Ae Ryun Cho	Exec. Manager for Marketing and Operation
NO. 1 ACTIVITY NETWORK SYSTEM (NANS), INC. Unit 22pc Eisenhower Condominium, # 7 Eisenhower St., San Juan City	Ccohock Lim Kim (w/o Choi)	Finance Manager
METROBANK CARD CORPORATION 12/F MCC Center, 6778 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Anthony Peter Maughan	President
NUGABEST PHILIPPINES, INC. Level 2-2065 A Festival Supermarket Filinvest, Muntinlupa City	Miae Jeong (w/o Baek)	General Manager
NUGABEST PHILIPPINES, INC. Level 2-2065 A Festival Supermarket Filinvest, Muntinlupa City	Wan Who Baek	Operation Manager
EDUGATE INCORPORATED 320 2C East Tower, PSE Ctr. Exchange Rd., Pasig City	Jungsoo Kim	IT Developer
CARPA IMPORT SERVICES 128 Sun Valley Drive, Km. 15 West Service Rd., South Super Highway, Paranaque City	Zuxin Hong	Warehouse Checker
WON KWANG INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORP. JPL Bldg., Pedro Gil cor. Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Bo-Min Kim	Assistant Manager
CLEAN AIR INITIATIVE FOR ASIAN CITIES (CAI-ASIA) CENTER, INC. Unit 3510 35/F, Robinson's- Equitable Tower, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Sophie Sabine Punte	Deputy Executive Director
ALTERA CONSOLIDATED MINING, INC. Unit 603 Taipan Place, F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hongxing Tan	Vice President-Finance and Administration
TG.ACADEMY INC. 20/F Strata 2000, F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Kyeung Sook Park	Korean Consultant
RAKSO AIR TRAVEL & TOURS, INC. 112 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Ha Chul Kim	Sales Manager
YOOHAN TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. G/F Damon Bldg., D. Macapagal Ave., Pasay City	Kyubum Choi	Assistant Sales Consultant
BUREAU VERITAS SA 8/F Ramon Magsaysay Center, 1680 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Jongseop Michael Shim	New Construction Surveyor
PILIPINAS INTERNATIONAL MARKETING SERVICES, INC. 28/F Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas, Pasig City	Kazumi Yoshida	Japanese Customer Service Associate
WELLCOM TELECOM SUPERMARKET INC. JMBC Bldg., Zansibar cor. Rockefeller St., Brgy. San Isidro, Makati City	Xinglai Li	Product/ Brand Director

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ISABEL G. PANGANIBAN-ORTIGUERRA
Acting Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity.
For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

ERRATUM

The notice of filing for application for AEP published on June 9, 2007 should have included the name of Mr. Hee Jung Tae, Assistant Field Officer of BMIC TRAVEL & TOURS CORP.
(PDI – July 24, 2007)

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HIV is no longer a death sentence, conference told

SYDNEY—HIV INFECTION IS NO LONGER A DEATH SENTENCE, with patients likely to have a "fairly robust" life expectancy if given the right drugs, a major HIV/AIDS conference in Australia heard Monday.

Michael Lederman, of Case Western Reserve University, has been treating HIV patients for more than 20 years and said he has seen such improvements that he believes the world could be on the cusp of ending the pandemic.

"I have been doing HIV care since 1983," he told a press conference at the fourth International AIDS Society Conference in Sydney. "And in those days I would regularly see my patients die. Life expectancy was short.

"I wouldn't even tell my patients who enjoyed cigarettes to stop smoking because it didn't seem to make a lot of sense if we were talking about survival in terms of months and a few years.

"But now we are talking about a fairly robust life expectancy."

While the life expectancy for a person infected with HIV was not quite the same as normal, the major health risks for his patients were the same as those facing the general population such as heart disease, Lederman said.

"So the future is a little uncertain but it is so bright, so bright compared to what it was 10, 15, 20 years ago," he said.

Lederman's comments echoed those of other high-profile speakers at the conference, who have said that powerful antiretroviral drugs now in use can prevent people from dying from the disease for decades.

"I think we are done with the mortality of AIDS in treated people," the head of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Michel Kazatchkine, told the conference on Sunday. "Only five years ago, hope was an abstract notion, now hope is a reality."

The possibility of eradicating HIV emerged in the mid-1990s when powerful antiretroviral therapies first became available but optimism faded because of the toxicity of the drugs.

Improved drugs have greatly reduced the toxic side effects while two new classes of medications are being developed to treat patients who have developed resistance to the antiretrovirals.

Lederman said the challenge would be seeing life-saving drugs made available in the developing world where less than 28 percent of those infected with HIV receive treatment.

"The challenge is huge. But I'm actually pretty optimistic that things are going in the right direction. I am looking at the cup as being more than half full," he told AFP.

Brian Gazzard, founder and chair of the British HIV Association, agreed that HIV patients who a decade ago would have died were now living long enough to have to manage the normal consequences of aging, such as heart disease.

But he said it would be wrong to believe the world was close to ending the devastation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is estimated to have claimed some 25 million lives in the past quarter century.

"I don't agree at all. I think the HIV epidemic is essentially uncontrolled. It is uncontrolled in Africa, it is uncontrolled completely in Asia really at the moment," he told the press conference. "I think the scale of the endeavor to actually beat this epidemic, nobody has started to really conceive of yet." *AFP*

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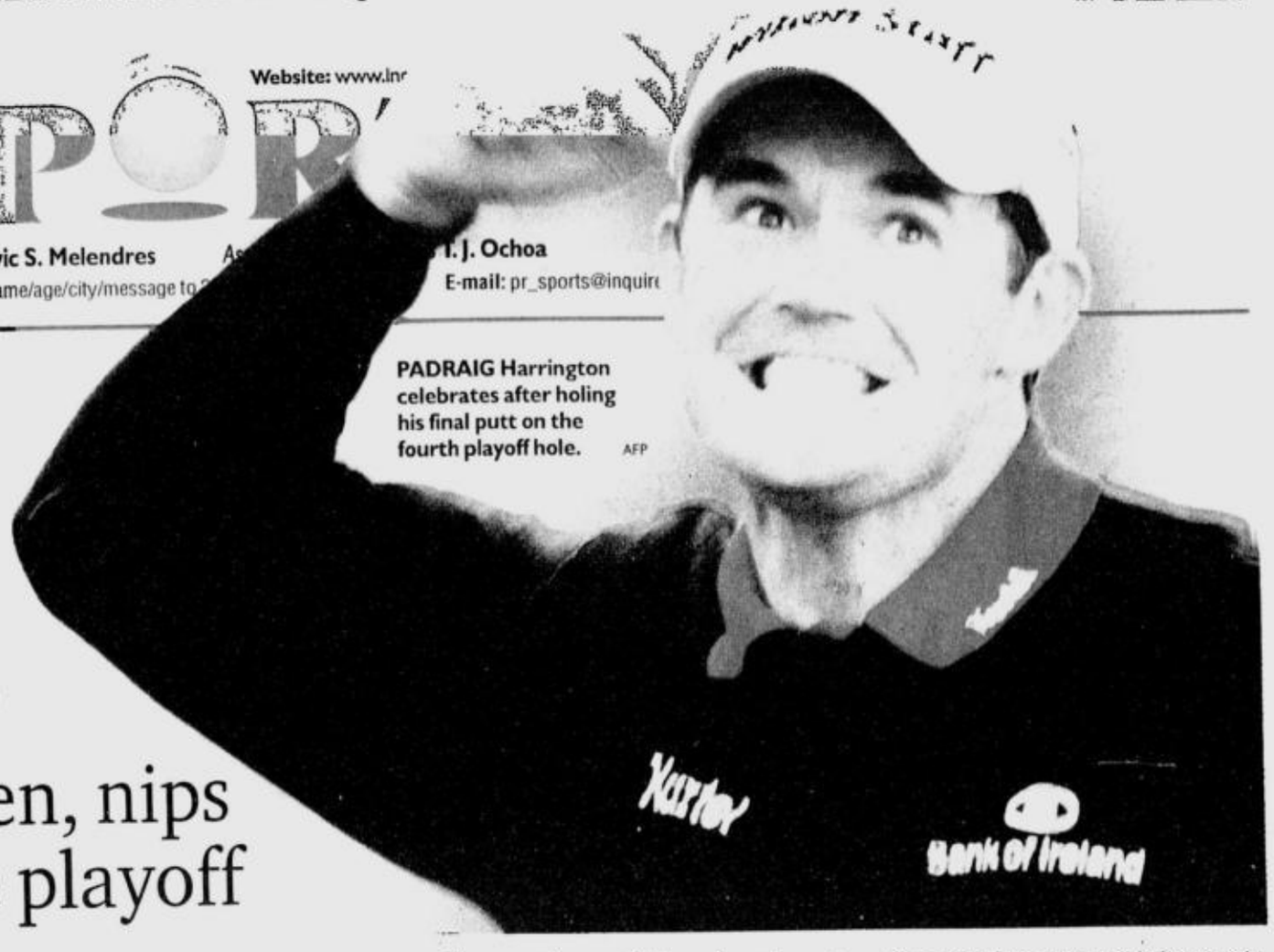

PADRAIG Harrington celebrates after holing his final putt on the fourth playoff hole. AFP

Perfect end for Padraig

Irishman wins British Open, nips Garcia in dramatic 4-hole playoff

CARNOUSTIE, SCOTLAND—PADRAIG HARRINGTON finally learned the lesson of Carnoustie, surviving a calamitous finish in regulation and a tense bogey putt in the playoff to win the British Open on Sunday.

In a final round that stirred memories of Jean Van de Velde's collapse eight years ago, Harrington lost a one-shot lead on the 72nd hole by hitting into the Barry Burn twice for a double bogey, only to get another chance when Sergio Garcia couldn't make par from a bunker.

Staked to a two-shot lead in the four-hole playoff against Garcia, Harrington played it safe the second time around on the 18th.

He hit iron off the tee, and another one to stay short of the burn. But a gutsy play by the Spaniard, who smoked a 6-iron from 203 yards out of the rough to birdie range, forced Harrington to make a nervy 3-footer to become the first Irishman in 60 years to win the claret jug.

Harrington thrust his fists in the air, a survivor as much as a champion, and before long he was waving the Irish flag and doing his best to stop the tears.

"I think if I had lost, it would have been hard to take it," Harrington said. "But because I had a chance, I didn't let myself get down about taking a 6. I convinced myself if there was a playoff, I would do my best."

Devastating loss

It was a devastating loss for Garcia, who had a three-shot lead going into the final round and was poised to win a major championship he has been chasing since he was a teenager.

He was 10 feet away from winning, and his par putt on the 18th hole in regulation looked good all the way until it dipped slightly on the left side and spun out.

"To tell you the truth, I don't feel like I did anything wrong," said Garcia, who closed with a 73 and was 1 over in the playoff *(See sidebar below)*.

Harrington, who closed with a 4-under 67 to make up a six-shot deficit, played the playoff holes in even par, seizing control with a 7-iron into 8 feet for birdie on the first hole as Garcia made bogey from a bunker.

Like the last Open at Carnoustie, there was chaos in the end. Only this time, it involved more than one player.

Van de Velde self-destructed on his own in 1999, blowing a three-shot lead on the final hole.

Eight years later, the bad luck belonged to Andres Romero of Argentina, who looked like another unlikely champion at Carnoustie until his 2-iron from the rough on the 17th hole ricocheted off the stone wall of Barry Burn and across the 18th fairway, out-of-bounds. He finished third, a stroke behind, after a 67 which included 10 birdies but two double bogeys.

The bizarre bounce went to Harrington, whose tee shot on the 18th hole hopped along a bridge over the burn until it went between two rails and into the winding stream. He also chunked his next shot into the burn, then made a clutch putt from 5 feet for double bogey.

Out of the picture

That left only bad timing for Garcia.

This just wasn't his day.

It was his third time to play in the final group of a major, this time with Tiger Woods out of the picture early. But the 27-year-old Spaniard couldn't buy a putt.

Two shots down with two holes to go in the playoff, and with Harrington in trouble right of the par-3 16th green, Garcia watched in disbelief as his tee shot smacked the base of the pin and went 18 feet away.

He missed the birdie putt. He missed a lot of putts in the final round, which remains the weakness in his game.

At one time, he muttered to himself, pleading on one occasion, "Please, please, please my God, please."

He closed with a 73, joining Harrington in the playoff at 7-under 277. The winning score was 13 shots lower than it was the last time at Carnoustie, but everything else—especially the final holes—was eerily similar.

Almost lost in the crazy finish was Harrington, who ended Europe's eight-year drought without a major.

Winner for the past two years, Woods finished in a tie for 12th after a final round 70 left him five off Harrington and Garcia. *AP*

Sergio not a choker—just cursed

CARNOUSTIE, SCOTLAND—SERgio Garcia insisted he would bounce back from the trauma of throwing away his chance to claim his first major title at a British Open he had led from the opening day.

The petulant tenor of his remarks after losing out to Padraig Harrington on Sunday, however, suggests that this was an experience that could leave lasting scars on Garcia's psyche.

Garcia would still have won if he had been able to par the final hole after Harrington had twice found water on the 18th.

Instead, he opted for an iron off the tee, leaving himself with a three-iron second that he deposited into a greenside bunker before seeing his 10-foot par putt lip out.

HOW NOT TO MISS A SHOT: Spaniard Sergio Garcia reacts after hitting into the bunker on the 18th hole during the final round of the 136th British Open in Carnoustie, Scotland. AFP

"I still don't know how that par putt missed," he said. "I thought it was there but it just moved a little left. "I should write a book on how to not miss a shot in the playoff and shoot one over."

Garcia's acute sense that he is cursed would have been encouraged by his experience of playing the second playoff hole, par three 16th, where his tee shot struck the pin and ricocheted 20 feet from the hole.

"It seems to me that every time I get in this kind of position I have no room for error. I rarely get any good breaks." *AFP*

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Brain scans show Amonsot free of blood clot

UP AND ABOUT: Czar Amonsot

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

FILIPINO CZAR AMONSOT looked good after doctors conducted three tests on him following his 12-round loss to WBO lightweight interim champion Michael Katsidis last Sunday.

Amonsot's manager Michael Aldeguer, who has been with his boxer in hospital since Sunday when he was brought there along with Katsidis, said yesterday's brain tests showed "Czar is stable and doing very well."

The Nevada Athletic Commission said initial tests after the fight, where Amonsot was floored twice and lost by unanimous decision to Katsidis, showed that the Filipino had a "small brain clot."

Aldeguer said a scan was scheduled at 6 p.m. yesterday (Las Vegas time) "to clear out everything."

Cutman Tony Martin of Las Vegas, who is also monitoring Amonsot's progress, was upbeat on the fighter's health.

"He fought one hell of a fight, showing the true spirit of a brave and big hearted fighter," Martin wrote in an email to this correspondent.

"I have just left Czar's bedside at the hospital and he is in great spirits. He just wants to go home. He spoke with his mother over the phone, just to put her mind at rest."

Martin said a member of the hospital staff told him that Amonsot would undergo an MRI scan today.

"The Nevada commission is very strict, hence the reason why Czar has had so many tests," Martin said. "The hospital has to be 100 percent sure before they can release him, because of the legal side of things."

Three CT scans conducted on Amonsot revealed negative results, contrary to earlier reports that he suffered a "blood clot" on his brain.

"These reports tend to be exagerrated," said trainer Edito Villamor. "Czar is up and about."

Nat'l cagers leave for Fiba Asia Friday

By Musong R. Castillo

THE HIGH-PROFILE PHILIPPINE basketball team departs for Tokushima, Japan, on Friday looking forward to an exciting tournament in its quest for an Olympic qualifying ticket.

Though injuries to key players are healing fast and Philippine passports have yet to be issued to two key men, national coach Chot Reyes expects a fruitful campaign in the Fiba Asia Championship that will start on July 28.

"It's an exciting time for us as players, the coaching staff, the PBA, and especially the Philippines," said point guard Jimmy Alapag, who won the MVP award in the recent 4-Nation Invitational ruled by the Filipinos over Lebanon.

"We've got a great opportunity."

Reyes will be taking all 15 players in the national pool to Japan hoping that Kelly Williams and former George Mason star Gabe Norwood would get their RP passports before he names the official lineup during the manager's meeting on the eve of the tournament.

The Nationals slug it out with Iran on opening day before clashing with defending China the following day.

The Filipinos tackle Jordan on July 30 to wrap up their elimination-round stint.

The RP five needs to win at least two games to barge into the quarterfinals.

Danny Seigle, who rejoined the team during the Kuwait tune-up games after missing three weeks of training due to a pulled hamstring and an ankle sprain, said his injuries are healing fast.

JIMMY ALAPAG: Big opportunity for RP team.

Squires up as Red Cubs stop Staglets

By Marc Reyes

JOHN NOBLE SCORED nine of his 30 points in overtime as Letran outlasted Jose Rizal, 111-107, for the solo lead, even as San Beda stopped two-time defending champion San Sebastian, 83-73, yesterday in the NCAA junior basketball competition at the Arena.

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	4	1
San Beda	3	2
S Sebastian	3	2
JRU	2	3
CSB-LSGH	2	3
Perpetual	1	4

GAMES TOMORROW
(The Arena, San Juan)
2 p.m.—JRU vs St. Benilde (Srs)
4 p.m.—San Beda vs Letran (Srs)

Later in the day, Perpetual notched its first win at the expense of St. Benilde-La Salle Green Hills, 78-73.

After scoring an undergoal stab to force extra time, Noble completed a three-point-play off Russel Matias to give the Squires the lead for good, 108-104, with just one minute and 16 seconds left.

Letran picked up a fourth consecutive victory while pinning a third loss in five games on the Light Bombers, who wasted a 41-point job from Bon Jovi Cipriano.

The Red Cubs relied heavily on Dennis Bermas, who topscored with 23 points, and some defensive gems thrown at league top scorer Ryan Buenafe to tie their victims at 3-2.

Buenafe, who set the season-high 44 points against Jose Rizal last week, still managed to produce 25 points, 15 of them on free throws. But he struggled from the field under the tight guarding of Leeward Lobaton, Juan Asinas and David Banal.

Jomar Pagkalinawan starred with 29 points for the Altalettes who remain at the cellar with a 1-4 record. The Junior Blazers slumped to 2-3 in a tie with the Lighties.

Pilipinas Amateur Tour resumes at Riviera today

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL INAUGURAL SWING, THE Pilipinas Amateur Golf Tour presented by Samsung resumes today with its second leg at the Couples course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

The ladies division entries and lesser lights will take the first crack at the course which is being spruced up for next month's national team qualifying tournament.

Carmelette Villaroman and national campaigner Lucy Landicho head the ladies' field teeing off with players in Class C (15-21.9 handicap) and Class D (22 and above).

Rufino Bayron, winner of the kickoff leg at Pueblo de Oro in Cagayan de Oro City, heads the 48-player championship division which will tee off tomorrow.

Those in Class A (4-8.9) and Class B (9-14.9) will play on Thursday and Friday.

Apart from Bayron and his Calatagan teammates, the field was bloated by 18 South Koreans and Canlubang bets led by former national player Dave Hernandez.

Also joining the championship battle are Jonel Ababa, Mark Fernando and Jersel Balasabas who finished second to fourth in Cagayan de Oro, jungolf standout Tonlits Asistio, Kevin Tayao and Raymund Sangil.

Tour director Boy Blue Ocampo said he expects low scores in this leg, considering the ideal weather.

Iloilo nips Tagaytay, gains semis

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE TOYOTA-ILOILO Warriors continued their amazing run in the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball playoffs Sunday by ousting fancied Tagaytay Spring in overtime, 88-86, at the Corpus Christi gym here.

The Warriors of businessman Robert Uy and supporter Mayor Jerry Trenas led 78-75 with six seconds remaining, but Nani Epondulan, who drew a foul from Iloilo's Floyd Dedicatoria from beyond the arc, sank three free throws to extend the match.

"I couldn't believe we made it again," said Uy. "I hope we go all the way this time."

The Warriors scored six points at the start of the overtime and never looked back to book a semifinal meeting with defending champion Ozamiz tomorrow, July 25, at the Gov. Medina Sr. gym in Ozamiz City.

The scores:

ILOILO 88—Senieres 26, Balgos 18, Tan 11, Dedicatoria 9, Pelopero 8, Sencil 6, Leonida 5, Laborte 3, Guanco 2.

TAGAYTAY 86—Marquez 27, Epondulan 15, Rodriguez 13, Mallari 9, Tajonera 8, Reyes 4, Yambao 3, Bolocon 2, D. Castro 2.

Quarters: 24-20, 44-42, 61-66, 78-78 (Reg), 88-86

Office of the President of the Philippines
PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT STAFF
Malacañang

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Office of the President-Presidential Management Staff (PMS), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), hereby invites all interested Government Electronic Procurement System (G-EPS) registered security service providers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of the following:

Name of Project : **Procurement of Security Services for the PMS**
Location : PMS Central Office and Regional Field Offices
Brief Description : To provide security services to PMS Central Office and regional field offices
Approved Budget for the Contract : Five Million Fifty Eight Thousand One Hundred Twenty Pesos (Php 5,058,120.00)
Contract Duration : One (1) year
Delivery Period : 01 September 2007 – 31 August 2008

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with the value of the largest single contract at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget of the herein project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, lease or under purchase) available for the prosecution thereof. The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Terms of Reference and in the Instruction to Bidders. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule/Time/Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	23-27, 30, 31 July 2007
2. Pre-bid Conference	31 July 2007, 2:00 PM at the 8/F Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
3. Submission of Eligibility Requirements	13 August 2007, 1:00 PM at the 8/F Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
4. Opening of Bids	13 August 2007, 2:00 PM at the 8/F Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Two Thousand Pesos (Php2,000.00) to the PMS Cashier.

Only the bids of eligible bidders shall be opened in the presence of the bidders or their duly authorized representative, as evidenced by the Special Power of Attorney or Board resolution. The opening of bids shall be done right after the checking of the eligibility requirements. Only bids from prospective bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened.

The PMS reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any minor defects therein, to annul the bidding process, to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and to accept only the offer that is most advantageous to the government.

The PMS assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) ASSEC. ELIZABETH M. GONZALES
Chairperson, PMS-BAC

(PDI–July 24, 2007)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Erection and Installation of Sangali-Pitogo 138 kV Transmission Line Project
Schedule II – Tower SP-124 to Pitogo Substation
(Sp07.SPTL.Mc-0098)

The work contemplated to be done by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all superintendence, labor materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), and constructing complete the transmission lines in accordance with the requirements of the Plans and Specification.

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TransCo)**, through the **Annual Corporate Budget for the contract approved by the governing board**, intends to apply the sum of **PHP 96,272,000.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Erection and Installation of Sangali-Pitogo 138 kV Transmission Line Project Schedule II – Tower SP-124 to Pitogo Substation (Sp07.SPTL.Mc-0098)**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. **TransCo** now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for **furnishing labor, materials, equipment (except materials specified to be furnished by TransCo) supplies, tools and other works to complete the Project.** Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs and secure the Eligibility Documents upon payment of non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) starting July 16, 2007 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM** at the BCMD office with the address given below. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on **July 31, 2007, 9:00 AM.** Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a **"pass/fail"** basis. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents. PCAB License and Registration particular required should be as follows:
   License Particular — **At least Category "A", General Building or SP – Electrical Works**
   Registration Particular: **At least "Medium B", SP – Electrical Works**
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at the BCMD with the address given below.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from **TransCo** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the BCMD at the address given below.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative starting from **August 6, 2007 – 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.**
7. **TransCo** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **August 22, 2007, 1:30 PM at Rodriguez Room, Training Center.**
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **September 3, 2007, 1:30 PM.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any form and in amount stated in the Bidding Documents or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **September 3, 2007, 1:30 PM at Rodriguez Room, Training Center.**
9. The Contractor shall complete the works within **Three Hundred (300) calendar days** counted from the effective date stated in the Notice to Proceed.
10. **TransCo** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

MR. R. D. NABONG
Manager, **Bids and Contracts Management Department**
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Facsimile No.: 921-2308
Email Address: **rdnabong@transco.ph**
Website address: **www.transco.ph**

(Sgd.) ATTY. NOEL Z. DE LEON
Vice-President – General Counsel
& Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – July 24, 2007)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Erection and Installation of Sangali-Pitogo 138 kV Transmission Line Project
Schedule I – Sangali Substation to Tower SP-123
(Sp07.SPTL.Mc-0097)

The work contemplated to be done by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all superintendence, labor materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), and constructing complete the transmission lines in accordance with the requirements of the Plans and Specification.

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TransCo)**, through the **Annual Corporate Budget for the contract approved by the governing board**, intends to apply the sum of **PHP 96,101,000.00** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Erection and Installation of Sangali-Pitogo 138 kV Transmission Line Project Schedule I – Sangali Substation to Tower SP-123 (Sp07.SPTL.Mc-0097)**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. **TransCo** now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for **furnishing labor, materials, equipment (except materials specified to be furnished by TransCo) supplies, tools and other works to complete the Project.** Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs and secure the Eligibility Documents upon payment of non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) starting July 16, 2007 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM** at the BCMD office with the address given below. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on **July 31, 2007, 9:00 AM.** Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a **"pass/fail"** basis. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents. PCAB License and Registration Particular required should be as follows:
   License Particular — **At least Category "A" General Building or SP – Electrical Works**
   Registration Particular : **At least "Medium B", SP – Electrical Works**
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
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(Sgd.) ATTY. NOEL Z. DE LEON
Vice-President – General Counsel
& Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – July 24, 2007)

Alonso cuts Hamilton lead with Euro victory

NUERBURG, GERMANY—FERNANDO Alonso's victory at the European Grand Prix has made the Formula One championship a much tighter contest.

By overtaking Felipe Massa late in the race in slippery conditions on Sunday, Alonso moved within two points of McLaren-Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton.

"I like rain," Alonso said.

Hamilton was ninth, the English rookie finishing off the podium for the first time in 10 races this season and leading Alonso only 70 points to 68.

Hamilton was 12 points ahead coming into the grand prix but he crashed in Saturday's qualifying and started from 10th place after getting medical clearance to drive on the morning of the race.

Alonso won the championship the previous two seasons with Renault, before moving to McLaren, where he has been upstaged by the rookie.

But with seven races remaining Alonso is much closer to defending his title than before the weekend.

The race was halted after four laps because of a heavy shower. The rain returned with 11 laps left with Massa in the lead ahead of Alonso.

A great battle ensued over the next two laps and with less than five laps remaining, the two touched wheels as Alonso pushed past Massa's Ferrari and went on to record his 18th career F1 victory.

Kimi Raikkonen, who started from the pole position but lost the lead in a chaotic start, pulled out in the 34th lap due to a hydraulic problem with his Ferrari.

Alonso crossed the line in 2 hours, 6 minutes, 26.358 seconds over 60 laps on the 5.1-kilometer Nuerburgring circuit.

Massa was eight seconds behind in second, and Mark Webber was 1:05 back in third for Red Bull to equal his career best finish at Monaco in 2005.

Markus Winkelhock, driving in his first Formula One race, was a surprise leader for Spyker when he pitted after the warm-up lap to put on wet-weather tires as the rain started falling.

Hamilton was among six cars that slid off into the gravel. With his engine still running, he was lifted by a crane and put back on track before the red flag came out. The race resumed after 30 minutes. *AP*

FERNANDO Alonso relishes his victory. AP

Contador wins a la Armstrong

PLATEAU DE BEILLE, FRANCE—THE way Alberto Contador tore away in a mountaintop finish and outsprinted his chief rival to win the 14th stage of the Tour de France was a flashback to Lance Armstrong's era.

Ironically, the Discovery Channel team may have found a successor to seven-time Tour winner Armstrong in the year the team's sponsorship deal runs out.

"I'm certain Contador will win the Tour in the future," Discovery's sporting director Johan Bruyneel said.

Contador was toe-to-toe with race leader Michael Rasmussen when the pair neared the summit of the 197-kilometer (122-mile) ride from Mazamet to Plateau de Beille on Sunday, the first of three tortuous Pyrenees stages.

The two had taken it in turns to pull up Plateau de Beille in order to distance rivals Cadel Evans, Levi Leipheimer and Andreas Kloeden. Legs churning in perfect unison, they ruthlessly dropped all three.

Then, with 200 meters left, Contador sized up Rasmussen, made his move down the right, boxed the Dane in next to the barriers, and left him in his wake.

It seemed like a replay of Armstrong's win up to Le Grand Bornand in 2004 in the Alps.

Armstrong had dropped his teammate Floyd Landis after he'd slogged for him up the hills, and then the American overtook Kloeden at the top of the final ascent just as the two turned into a corner. Armstrong stormed past him and fist-pumped gleefully at the line.

Contador pumped his fist twice on his heart, and then made a gesture with his fingers as if he was firing a pistol to gun down his rivals after winning in 5 hours, 25 seconds, 48 seconds, and closing to within 2:23 of Rasmussen.

Bruyneel once sent Armstrong an e-mail shortly before the 1999 Tour predicting that Armstrong would be on the Tour podium. He clearly sees a winner in Contador, and maybe even a similar independence of spirit.

Like cancer survivor Armstrong, Contador had serious health setbacks, notably when he suffered a massive blood clot in his brain that needed surgery in 2004. *AP*

ALBERTO Contador of Spain exults as he crosses the finish line ahead of overall leader Michael Rasmussen of Denmark to win the 14th stage of the 94th Tour de France between Mazamet and Plateau de Beille, southern France, Sunday. AP

AMA bounces back, edges CEU in overtime

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CHITO JAIME CAME THROUGH WITH a layup to send the game into overtime then added 12 more points as AMA Computer turned back Centro Escolar, 84-76, yesterday in the National Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu) basketball tournament at the UM Gym.

The 6-foot-5 Jaime finished with 30 points to help defending champion AMA recover from its inaugural defeat to STI.

Jeric Magno shot 31 points for the Scorpions, who took a second straight loss.

In late games Saturday, St. Clare banked on Mitch Lodia's 30-point effort to crush University of Makati, 99-87. San Sebastian-Cavite, with Jerome Cenita scoring 32 points, beat CEU, 76-67, while New Era bested Holy Angel, 76-65. Glen Manlutac gave CEU a 68-65 lead with 48.3 seconds left but Jaime put in a free throw then finished a fast break to extend the match.

The scores:

AMA 84—Jaime 30, Abac 15, Manalang 12, Galang 11, Vergara 5, Zablan 4, Salvador 3, Mollena 2, Bernardo 0, Alfarao 0.

CEU 76—Magno 31, Macasaet 13, Salamat 10, Manlutac 7, Manajero 7, Villamayor 3, Ignabi 2, Iaota 2, Flores 2, Zapanta 0, Dy 0, Casas 0.

Quarters: 19-28, 32-39, 50-50, 68-68, 84-76

Taiwanese dump Filipino clouters

GAMES TODAY (Angeles City)
9 a.m.—Hong Kong vs. RP-Metro Manila
11 a.m.—RP-Central Luzon vs. Japan
1 p.m.—Hong Kong vs. RP-Central Luzon
3 p.m.—Japan vs. Chinese Taipei

ANGELES CITY—CHINESE Taipei combined superb pitching and power hitting to smother RP Team-Metro Manila, 10-2, yesterday to notch its second straight victory in the Pony Baseball 33rd Asia-Pacific Zone-Bronco Division Championship at the Maria Wright Field here.

The Taiwanese, who opened their bid with a 19-1 rout of the other RP Team from Central Luzon, leaned on pitchers Hsu Yu-ten and Cheng Ju-meng while blasting the Filipinos with an eight-run splurge at the bottom of the third inning to spark the rout.

Hsu also belted a two-run single to stoke the big Taiwan surge that broke a 1-1 count after two innings.

Japan matched Taiwan's 2-0 start as it blanked Hong Kong, 12-0, even as RP-Metro Manila downed RP-Central Luzon, 5-2, in a clash of local teams later in the day.

The Metro Manilans took a second straight loss following a 1-3 setback to the Japanese Sunday and virtually bowed out of the chase for the lone berth to the Pony (11-12) World Series set next month in California.

Anton Manzano, Dio Remollo and Patrick David took turns against Taiwan's battery of hitters but had no answer to the awesome firepower of their taller, stronger foes.

"They were just too strong, they hit really well against us," said RP team-Metro Manila coach Joey Carillo in Filipino.

RP-Metro Manila, composed of players from rival Illam and Muntinlupa groups, started well by scoring a run in the first inning courtesy of a three-base hit by Rapho Balagtas that scored Remollo.

But Hsu immediately tied the count in Taiwan's half of the inning. The Taiwanese bombarded the Filipinos with 12 hits against just three by the locals.

The top two teams after the single-round elimination will clash in the final for the right to represent Asia Pacific in the World Series.

Missing Bata Reyes

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

AFTER A LONG ABSENCE FROM THE local sports scene, Efren "Bata" Reyes, who is generally acclaimed as "The Finest Pool Player on Earth," will strut his savvy once more during the Sargo's Golden Classics starting on Aug. 4 at the Bugsy's Lair Billiards Hall in Sgt. Esguerra in Timog, Quezon City.

A Poker Pool event, "Sargo" is organized by RPN-9 and Solar Entertainment Corp. It will be aired every Saturday from 7 to 9 p.m.

A top RPN-9 official said the presence of Reyes in the second leg is eagerly awaited by billiards aficionados, adding that the organizing committee is grateful to billiards godfather Aristeo "Putch" Puyat for giving Reyes the go-signal to participate in the event.

Always the darling of the crowd because of his flawless style and pleasant demeanor, Reyes is a source of pride and inspiration since 1985 when Reyes, then only 30 years old, won his first tournament in the United States-the Red's 9-Ball Open in Houston, Texas. Today his impact is still being felt even though he is now pushing 53 (Reyes was born on Aug. 26, 1954 in Mexico, Pampanga).

"The likes of Efren Reyes had not been seen in the US Tour," wrote Mike Panozzo of Billiards Digest. "His roller-coaster strokes, merciless safeties and mind-bending kick shots (which earned the Filipino cue artist the moniker "The Magician") had the fans and the pros alike confounded. He became the rage of the American pool scene. Crowds were always largest at the venues where Reyes played."

A former world pool 9-ball champion (he won in Cardiff, Wales in 1999), he also emerged winner of last year's IPT World 8-Ball Championship in Reno, Nevada, among other extraordinary achievements. More importantly, Reyes has given the sport world-wide respect and recognition with the way he plays and conducts himself in and outside the pool halls.

***

Kudos to the Alaska Aces for winning this year's PBA Fiesta Conference by beating the Talk N' Text Phone Pals in seven drama-filled games, 4-3. My hat's off to team owner Wilfred Uytengsu, head coach Tim Cone, players Willie Miller, who won his second MVP (he won the first time when he played for Red Bull in 2002) and Rosell Ellis, who was named Best Import of the Conference and to all the other members of the team for a job well done! I would like to congratulate Miller especially for playing magnificently throughout this season.

SPORTSWATCH

RP beach volley bets in world championship

BOOSTED BY THEIR IMPRESSIVE SHOWing in the Canadian leg, Filipino beach volleybelles Heidi Ilustre and Diane Pascua barged into the main draw of the World beach volleyball championship which starts today in Switzerland.

The Fil-American duo, seeking an unprecedented berth in the Beijing Olympics next year, will pit their skills in the week-long event against the top 47 teams in the world based on current international rankings.

The RP belles, who have been joined in the World Tour by their US-based trainer Steve Boatright, have continued training in between their busy world circuit stint according to their handlers led by Tony Boy Liao.

After six legs in the World Tour, the RP tandem managed to rank 45th primarily due to a 17th place finish in Montreal. To gain an Olympic slot, they need to place in the top 24 in the world. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Lee tops Match Play

NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK—SEON HWA Lee defeated Ai Miyazato 2 and 1 here Sunday to become the first South Korean to win the Women's World Match Play Championship.

With the victory over the 22-year-old Miyazata, Lee captured her second career title on US soil. She won the ShopRite LPGA Classic on her way to clinching the tour's Rookie of the Year award last year.

Lee, a 21-year-old who turned professional at just 14, won the first hole with a par four and was never behind against the 12th-seeded Miyazato. *AFP*

Nadal gets 6th title of year

STUTTGART, GERMANY—WORLD NUMber two Rafael Nadal said he was pleased to win his sixth title of the year on Sunday when he beat unseeded Swiss Stanislas Wawrinka, 6-4, 7-5, in the Stuttgart final.

Triple French Open winner Nadal showed his class on his beloved clay by breaking Wawrinka's serve three times and needed just over two hours to seal his 93rd win in 94 matches on clay. It was Nadal's 16th straight clay-court final. *AFP*

SJC derby finals today

A FORMIDABLE LINEUP OF SABONG champions collide at San Juan Coliseum when the Rambulan 6-cock derby championship round takes place today.

Leading the qualifiers with two wins each are Allan Siaco and Rio Salceda, co-champions in the National Rambulan 8-cock derby last summer.

Top contenders include Rep. Gerry "Boy" Espina and two-time world champion William Go and Jun Topacio.

Pahabol draws big field

NO LESS THAN 100 PARTICIPANTS WILL gun for the championship of Pahabol Sa Taglugon 5-cock derby, set on July 31 and Aug. 2 at Roligon Mega Cockpit. The event will be hosted by Rolly Ligon, Entry fee is P7,700. For reservation of cockhouses, call 8512275 and 8529812 (Jona or Shirley). Meanwhile, the Roligon management designated yesterday Mimi Itchon as official screener for the Stag Festival 5-stag derby.

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Ort/Tri)—Kakawati (1), Record Holder (4), Golden Africa (5), Epic Energy (6)
Race 2—(Pen-ta/Ort/Tri)—Masterful Advocate (10), Memory Of Fire (4), Showgirl (3), Deep Impact (1), Yes Sir I'm Yours (8)
Race 3—(Pen-ta/Ort/Tri)—One Vision (1), Red Hot Water (7), Maricor's Charm (6), Cheska Run (9), Naglalabyog (2)
Race 4—(Ort/Tri)—Hok Kee Hok (2), Apple Splash (5), Sweet Luvin (3), Maximum Impact (8)
Race 5—(Pen-ta/Ort/Tri)—Scud Missile (3), At All Cost (2), Goldsphere (1), Mas Que Nada/Harrier (8), Golden Rhythm (7)
Race 6—(Ort/Tri)—Kawilwili (2), Carkito's Way (4), Kapit Bahay (1), Wild Orphan (6)
Race 7—(Pen-ta/Ort/Tri)—Daddy's Girl (9), Tribeca (3), Princess Leighla (7), Pirouette (2), Quasimodo (4)
Race 8—(Super 6/Ort/Tri)—Ledger Card/Mapagkwento (9), Please Don't Stop (7), Common Goal (8), Blondie Baj (10), Self-made (5), King View (1)

Suzuki Swift: Voted Automobile of the Year
Subcompact Sedan Category

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The motoring public's first view of Suzuki's new way forward came at the 2002 Paris Motor Show where Suzuki unveiled the Concept-S, a racy, rally-inspired concept vehicle that reflected influences from Suzuki's two-and-four-wheel racing activities and combined the benefits of Suzuki's racing heredity with cutting-edge technological features. Next to emerge from Suzuki's new programme was the Concept-S2, an open-top sports car in which Suzuki evolved its new model concept into a form with a more laid-back personality. Unveiled at the 2003 Frankfurt Motor Show, the Concept-S2 was dimensionally similar to the new-generation production vehicle toward which Suzuki was steadily working - a vehicle to be known as the new Suzuki Swift.

Plans for the new Swift took place around a totally new mindset: whereas, Japanese car development often focuses first on the needs of Japanese motorists, the designers and engineers assigned to the new Suzuki Swift focused first and foremost on Europe - the new Swift was to be a Japanese car developed in Europe for today's global market. The designer's first step was to establish a base in Europe, where they reassessed Suzuki's concept of car design and joined hands with European designers, who gave valuable insight into the European mindset. They stayed in Europe for six months, continuously refining the new Swift's design as they drew inspiration from the European landscape and people.

The result is an innovative, sporty and elegant design that has as an international appeal - a vehicle that embodies Suzuki's unique DNA in a way that has henceforth been generating excitement about Suzuki's new vision for the compact-car genre.

For more information, visit www.suzuki.com.ph.

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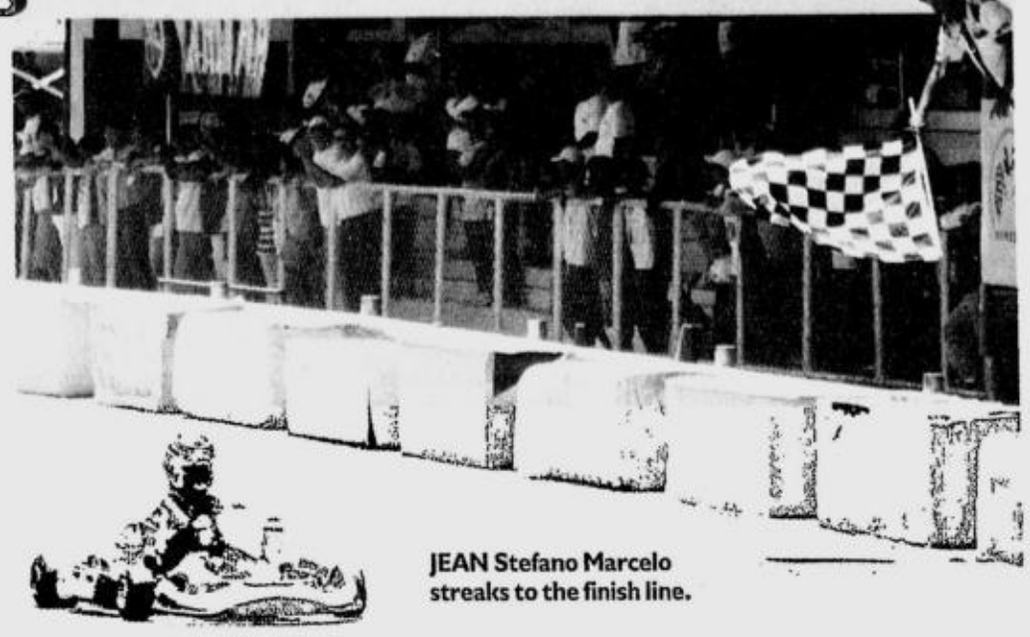

JEAN Stefano Marcelo streaks to the finish line.

Marcelo heads Pinoy karters' Asian GP romp

CARMONA, CAVITE—JEAN STEFANO Marcelo was unstoppable throughout as the Philippines captured 11 of the 12 titles at stake yesterday in the 2007 Shell Helix-Casino Filipino Kart Grand Prix—Asian Karting Open Championship at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

Giving himself a fitting gift on his 15th birthday, Marcelo quashed Hong Kong driver Alex Mui's threat by pulling away at the start to seize the premiere Formula 125 Seniors Open crown.

He finished the 26-lap final race in 18 minutes and 56.361 seconds or 2.64 seconds ahead of lone female entry Alessandra Madrigal of Alessandra Racing who clocked 18: 59.055 seconds.

Madrigal's teammate Maico Angeles bagged third place in the Formula 125 Seniors Open while Mui and fellow HK driver Luca Ferigutti checked in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Madrigal went on to claim the Rotax Max Seniors title over Birel Motorsports' Daniel Cleak and third placer Bobby Domingo.

But the biggest winner of the day was Jet Racing's Vencer John Suba who seized three titles—the ROJ Junior, the Formula 125 Junior and the Formula SL Expert plums.

Suba prevailed in a tight battle against veteran Indy Villalon of Birel Motorsports to rule the Formula SL Expert crown, turned back Roby Benito of Tuason Racing-R2R for the ROK Junior title and beat defending Asian Juniors champion Rio Haryanto of Indonesia for the Formula 125 Open Juniors plum.

The other Filipino winners in the event sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines were Renz Pazcoguin, Joey Orduna, Mike Casimiro, Vei-Ar Suba, Francis Reyes and Mars de los Reyes.

Pazcoguin won the Formula SL Novice title over Birel's Jaco Reyes and Paolo Ferrer while Orduna stamped his class over Liam Gout of Singapore and Jet Racing's Franco Reyes in the Mini-ROK division.

Mike Casimiro emerged champion in the ROK Seniors division.

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San Miguel to bid for Calaca power plant

Starts shift to heavy industry sector

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT San Miguel Corp. will bid for the government's 600-megawatt Calaca power plant in Batangas as it seeks to shift its focus into heavy industry.

The government, which plans to auction the coal-fired plant in October, had set a floor price of $288 million when it tried to auction it last year.

"San Miguel intends to bid for Calaca," a company source said. "But shareholder consent is needed as well as from the board."

San Miguel president Ramon Ang confirmed that the company would bid for the Calaca plant. "Yes," Ramon Ang said in a mobile text message to Reuters when asked about the company's plans for the power facility.

The Calaca facility will be bid out by the government on Oct. 16, its third attempt to sell the asset. Investors were previously put off bidding because the plant did not have a supply contract with National Power Corp., the country's biggest power distributor.

The government has since said it would guarantee a contract and earlier this month said 19 foreign and local investor groups had expressed interest in bidding for the plant.

San Miguel plans to spin off its domestic beer and regional packaging businesses and raise capital to fund its transformation into a conglomerate with investments in power, utilities, mining and infrastructure. It will seek shareholders' approval for the proposal today.

Company president Ramon Ang has already secured approval from the company's biggest stakeholders who own over 80 percent of the group for the plan.

The company source said San Miguel wanted to bid for another coal-fired power plant—the 600-megawatt Masinloc facility—but did not make it to the pre-qualification deadline of May 8.

San Miguel announced its strategic shake-up the same day.

The Masinloc plant will be auctioned later this month.

San Miguel also confirmed in a statement yesterday it was studying a possible investment in ethanol production as part of its "strategic supply assurance" for its liquor arm Ginebra San Miguel.

San Miguel was reportedly considering sugarcane lots totaling 76,000 hectares in three provinces in Luzon and in the Visayas for ethanol production.

San Miguel would need to invest between P8.68 billion to P16.28 billion for the ethanol plants, which were targeted to have a combined capacity of one million liters a day.

Ang, who is seen as the driving force behind San Miguel's shift into heavy industry, was part of a consortium that attempted to bid for a license to run the national power grid in a failed auction in February.

But he will not be able to take part in another bid for the national grid license if San Miguel buys a power plant in the Philippines because cross-ownership in the power sector is illegal.

San Miguel's A-shares, which are restricted to domestic investors, slid 0.68 percent to P73.50 and its B-shares, open to all, were down 1.21 percent to P81.50. *Reuters*

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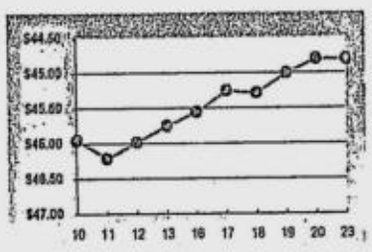
Interim vehicle insurance system takes effect /B6

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



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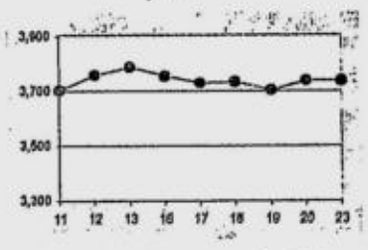
per ounce Hong Kong, July 23, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Stocks close flat

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

SHARE PRICES CLOSED flat in thin trade yesterday as investors stayed on the sidelines ahead of President Macapagal-Arroyo's annual State of the Nation Address to Congress, dealers said.

An initial public offering from broadcaster GMA Network and the follow-on offering of Philippine National Bank remained in focus, sapping liquidity, they added.

The composite index slipped 0.49 points at 3,737.79 and the all-share index dropped 2.54 points to 2,419.38.

There were 64 decliners and 47 advancers, with 63 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 4 billion shares worth P3.1 billion.

"The market looks a bit tired and President Arroyo's State of the Nation Address later (yesterday) gave investors an excuse to stay on the sidelines," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

"At the same time, the ongoing stock offerings continue to drain market liquidity."

Ms Arroyo's speech focused on her achievements in the past 12 months but De Leon said investors were more interested in knowing what she intends to do in the last three years of her term.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell P5 to P2,685, extending a correction after it hit record highs recently.

SM Prime Holdings retreated 50 centavos to P12.75. *AFP*

Gov't sells ₱18.77B in retail treasury bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE to sell P18.77 billion in retail treasury bonds (RTBs) during its price-setting auction yesterday on increased investor appetite for virtually risk-free instruments.

The Bureau of the Treasury set a minimum debt offering of P8 billion for RTBs or P4 billion for each of the 3- and 5-year maturities.

National Treasurer Roberto Tan said the government has canceled a scheduled treasury bill auction on July 30 after it raised P18.77 billion from the auction of retail bonds.

Tan added that the government expected to raise more money from the sale of the retail treasury bonds to small investors until July 31.

The July 30 treasury bill auction would have raised P5 billion for the government.

The 3-year RTBs fetched a rate of 6.875 percent, as bids for the government securities totaled P9.38 billion. The rate for the 5-year RTBs settled at 7.125 percent with tenders amounting to P9.49 billion.

The Treasury's auctions committee accepted P9.28 billion worth of bids for the 3-year bonds and the entire tenders of P9.49 billion for the 5-year securities.

Tan said the yields sought by banks were reasonable, encouraging the auction committee to accept more bids than the debt offering of only P8 billion.

"We are very happy with the results and are glad that the market was responsive to this issue. We look forward to generating more (demand) from the public during the offer period," Tan said in a briefing after the auction.

Tan said the interest rate for the 3-year RTBs was lower by 5.38 basis points than the secondary market rate for bonds of comparable tenors, while the rate for the 5-year RTBs was lower by 12.31 basis points.

After the interest rates for the RTBs were set yesterday, government securities eligible dealers (GSEDs) can now start selling these government securities to the public until July 31.

Roberto Juanchito Dispo, executive vice president of First Metro Investment Corp., said in the same briefing that government representatives and officials from the issue managers would conduct a roadshow in Cebu on July 25 and in Davao on July 26 to encourage more investors. Aside from First Metro, BPI Capital Corp. also serves as issue manager for the RTBs.

Unlike regular treasury bonds, RTBs are meant for small investors because the minimum investment requirement is only P5,000.

Dispo said demand to be generated until the end of the month

GOV'T/ B2

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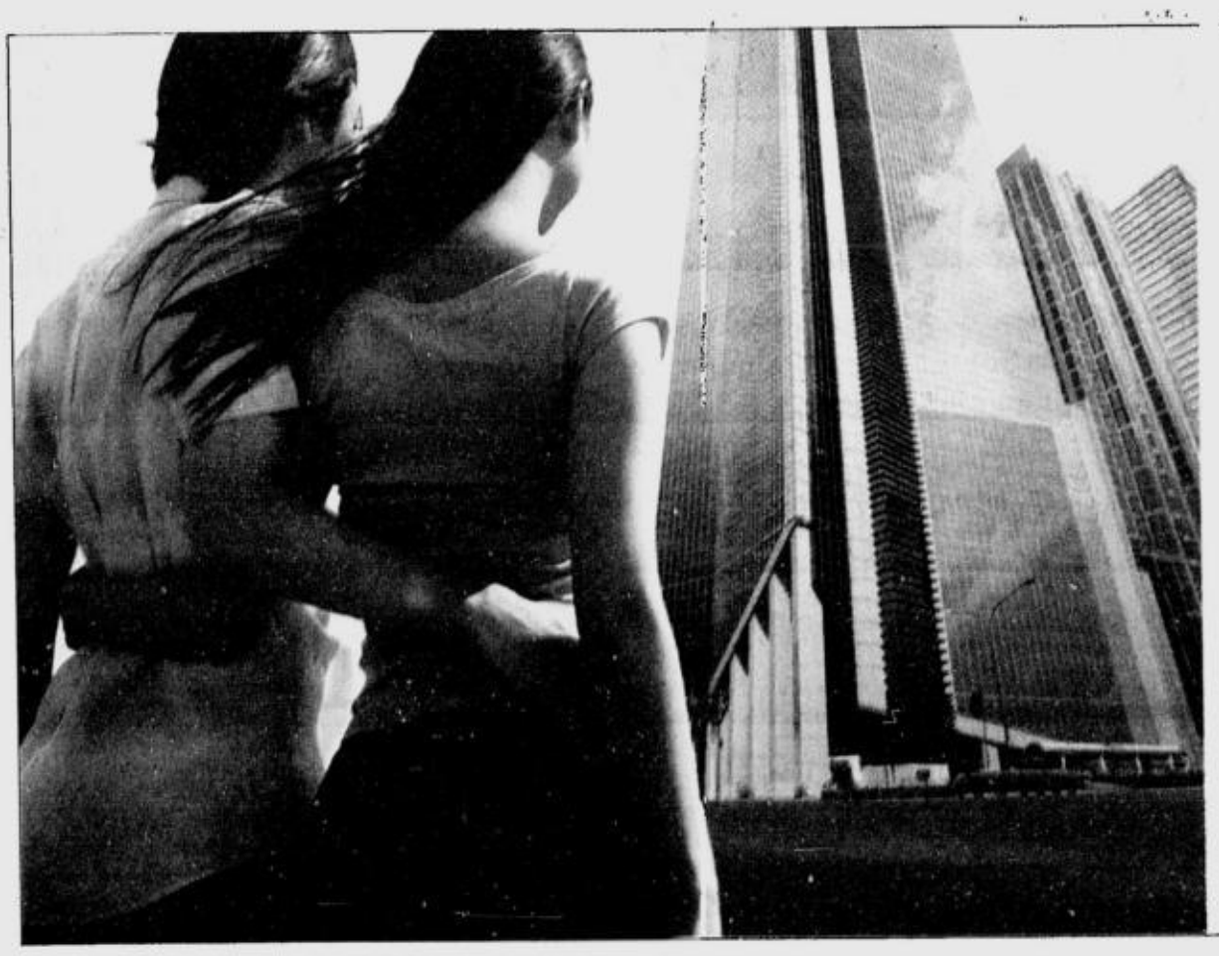

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Meralco hikes contract volume with Napocor

By Ronnel W. Domingo

DISTRIBUTION GIANT MANILA ELECTRIC Co. yesterday announced it had signed a supplementary supply agreement with National Power Corp., raising the contracted volume by 1,020 gigawatt-hours to a total of 7,666 GWh as Meralco addresses growing demand from its customers.

Meralco vice president Elpi Cuna said the firm signed the supplementary agreement to the transition supply contract with Napocor last July 19 to address the growth of the firm's needs that were not considered in the original TSC.

Under the TSC signed last Nov. 16, Meralco and Napocor agreed on a volume of 6,646 gWh a year for five years.

The TSC, which is renewable for another five years, will automatically end a year after the implementation of the open access and retail competition, the schedule for which has been repeatedly put off.

Cuna said the increase in contracted volume was aimed at facilitating the privatization of Napocor's power plants as it would make the assets more attractive to prospective bidders.

The increased volume would also "redound to the benefit of the consumers in terms of cheaper cost of power."

Meralco officials have said the company would heed the suggestion of resigned Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla that Meralco source more of its supply from Napocor.

"This is specifically the reason why we formalized our discussions with Napocor regarding our proposal to increase the contract (volume)," Cuna said.

"We reiterate our support to the government's efforts in privatizing state-owned generation plants," he added.

Cuna said that for the month of June, as in the previous supply months, Meralco was buying a greater portion of its supply from Napocor than the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market.

He added that the operation of Meralco's IPPs at higher capacities has also significantly lowered its overall generation cost.

"Meralco has always taken into consideration how increasing or decreasing the amount of power we obtain from any one source would ultimately impact on the bills of our customers," Cuna said.

At 7,666 GWh a year, Meralco would be buying about 30 percent of its supply needs from Napocor through the TSC.

Aside from IPPs, other Meralco sources are Napocor's customer choice program, which allows customers with average monthly peak demand of at least 750 kilowatts to take advantage of Napocor's lower rates at off-peak hours—as well as Napocor's one-day power sales and the WESM.

At maximum capacity, Meralco IPPs supply about half of the distributor's energy needs, while WESM accounts for a tenth.

RCBC Capital beats full-year target in first 6 months

THE INVESTMENT BANKING UNIT OF Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) said yesterday that brisk underwriting activities and stock market trading helped it surpass its full-year income target at the end of the first semester alone.

RCBC Capital Corp. said its pre-tax profit in the first half of 2007 reached P318.8 million, representing a 294-percent increase over the figure reported for the same period last year.

The investment house said this translates to a return on average equity of about 29.1 percent.

RCBC Capital president and CEO Raul Leopando said revenues for the period also reached P360.8 million, for an increase of 79.1 percent over the revenues reported in the first half of 2006.

"We recorded significant increases in our fee-based income as well as trading gains," Leopando said. "While we got some significant revenues from the underwriting of fixed income and equity issuances, this was buttressed by trading gains from positions we have taken in the stock market."

RCBC Capital was especially active in the first half of 2007, underwriting the follow-on offering of its parent bank's shares last March. It also acted as joint lead underwriter in the initial public offering of shares of National Re-Insurance Corp. of the Philippines (NRCP) and as lead underwriter for the stock rights offering of Engineering Equipment Inc. (EEI).

RCBC Capital is also involved in the upcoming public offerings of GMA Network Inc. and property developer Vista Land.

RCBC Capital senior vice president and COO Jose Luis F. Gomez also attributed the company's income growth to its investment positions in the capital market.

"The significant gains we have so far realized from our portfolio holdings attest to the soundness of our current portfolio strategy," he said.

RCBC Capital specializes in the underwriting of equity, quasi-equity and debt securities, loan syndications, and financial advisory services. It has acted as issue manager, lead or co-lead underwriter for several fund raising activities of both the government and privately owned companies.

In the local government unit (LGU) bond market, RCBC Capital is the most active player from the private sector having underwritten majority of the LGU bonds issued in the country, the company said.

Daxim L. Lucas

Gov't ...

From page B1

could reach at least P40 billion as domestic liquidity is currently high and many people were looking for safe investment opportunities.

"The prices were competitively set. We expect a positive response (from investors) by turning in huge volume of demand," he said.

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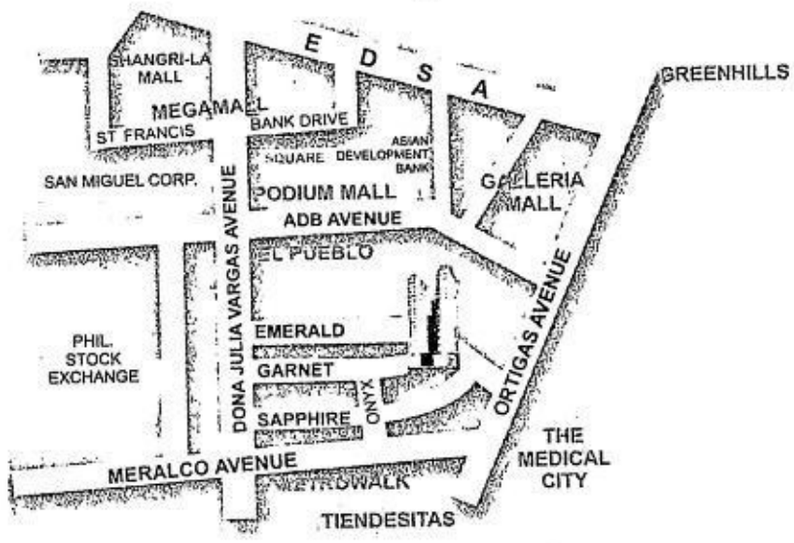

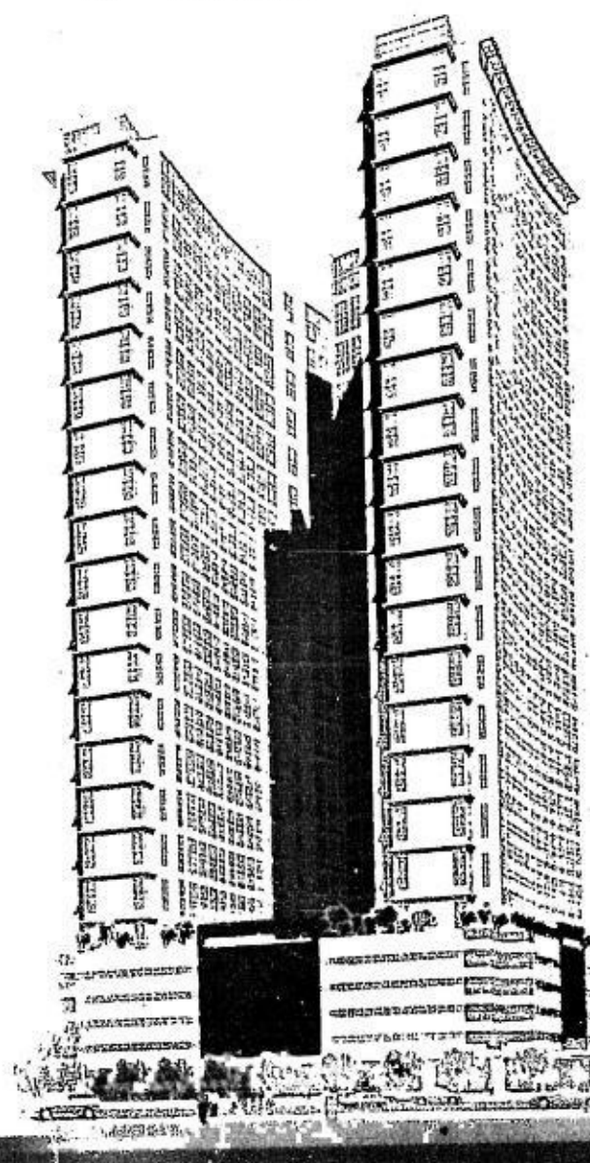

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Subprime mortgage losses scare Wall Street

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I MUST APOLOGIZE FOR NOT writing last week but on Friday, my wife cooked my favorite prawns in chili and garlic sauce and I fear it might have been contaminated with a touch of cyanide. Anyway, I was too ill to write though I started on my obituary. Fortunately, I feel fine again and look forward to another checkup next weekend on my kidneys, which I plan to IPO next month.

After the i-Pod and the i-Phone comes the i-Ball. I learned this from my chemistry teacher, Ethel Chloride, who was so cross-eyed that she couldn't keep control of her pupils.

A man visited a doctor and said, "I just dropped in to tell you how much I benefited from your treatment." The doctor replied that he was not one of his patients. "I know, but my Uncle Bill was, and I am his heir."

A young guy walks into a post office and sees a middle-aged man standing at the counter placing "LOVE" stamps on bright, pink envelops with hearts all over them. He then takes out a perfume bottle and sprays scent all over them. His curiosity getting the better of him, he asks the man what he is doing. The man replies, "I am sending out 1000 Valentine cards signed 'Guess who?'" "But why?" asked the young man. "Because I am a divorce lawyer."

My wife now spends all day playing with her DIGIBOX.

* * *

US stocks tumbled 149 points on Friday after touching 14,000 for the first time. This was partly due to disappointing results from GOOGLE, INTEL, PFIZER and CATERPILLAR but investors became increasingly worried by the possible fallout resulting from subprime mortgage losses. In my newsletter, I have been cautioning readers daily that it will take months before the full extent of the losses are known. The probability that only one hedge fund out of 9,000 has overvalued its collateralized deposit obligation (CDOs) is statistically extremely remote.

Federal Reserve Chair BERNANKE testified before Congress and while he was upbeat on the economy and expected GDP to grow 2.5 percent this year, he admitted that he was concerned about inflation. The "core inflation" rate, which excludes food and petrol, is 2.3 percent but if you add back the missing items, the true inflation rate is about 6 percent, roughly three times what Bernanke would like to see. Any reduction in interest rates this year seems unlikely but his hand might be forced by the mortgage situation.

Housing is the underlying problem and sales of new and existing homes declined last month as mortgage rates rose from 6.2 percent to 6.7 percent in three months while house prices declined. Moody's and Standard & Poor's have cut their ratings on 75 US CDOs and 14 European bonds, causing investors to flee from riskier investments to the safety of US treasury bonds. In a month, the yield on the 10-year note has dropped from 5.32 percent to 4.95 percent. BEAR STEARNS has warned that the remaining value of its two hedge funds is minimal and there is speculation that hedge funds could be looking at losses of up to $100 billion. This is a huge sum but modest in comparison to the trillions of dollars controlled by the hedge funds.

Everything now depends on the confidence factor and if it will hold up, the situation might yet be salvaged; if not, there could be a meltdown in the financial system. In any event, investors are going to remain very nervous. BERNANKE admitted that the subprime mortgage market had "deteriorated significantly," reflecting the higher delinquency rates. The worst scenario is that a million people could lose their homes during the next year.

Asian markets have not been affected with the Chinese economy growing 11.9 percent and indices rising last week to new highs in Australia, Hong Kong and Indonesia. The PSEi made a new high last week but in the last few days, signs of weakness are appearing. This is partly due to the number of IPOs this month, Aboitiz Power, GMA Network, Phoenix Petroleum and PNB. Looming ahead is VISTA LAND, a large IPO, at a time when the market is saturated. MEG is issuing 6 billion preferred shares and the Treasury is planning a large retail bond sale to replace maturing stocks. Foreign brokers have ceased being net buyers, deterred by the ultra-strong peso now below 45. This is hurting exporters, call centers and remittances from Filipinos working overseas. I feel that the bull market is near a state of exhaustion and have advised subscribes to hold IPVG, AT and 50 percent in cash.

As I advised readers to buy AT a few months ago, I attended the AGM. Most meetings are boring but this one was well received. The $100-million loan from Deutsche Bank is being used to rehabilitate CARMEN COPPER, which should start producing copper and gold around next Easter. The BERONG nickel mine is producing just under a million tons of nickel this year but this could rise to 3 million next year and 9 million in 2010, making it the world's largest nickel producer. AT is also seeking a London quotation in 2009. Our Research Department has raised its one-year target from P22.50 to P34.

The disappointment over Aboitiz Power, which opened at P6.20, and declined to P5.50, a 30-centavo discount, has its bright side because many clients were instructing their brokers to put their name down for every IPO. They thought it was a license to print money. Now they know differently and will be more careful in the future. Every IPO must be scrutinized and only those that appear attractive should be asked for. Consult your broker, not me, before making a decision; if you trade online, consult the computer.

CREDIT AGRICOLE has joined a number of other brokers in raising its target for MERALCO to P150. Our Research Department made this forecast six months ago when the price was much lower.

The PSE has proposed rules to allow short selling and this has been sent to the securities regulator for approval. The initiative is to raise the average daily turnover of our market, which pales in comparison with other markets in the region. Tokyo does as much business in a day as we do in 10 months. The central bank will complete new derivative rules that will allow banks to sell more kinds of investments such as guitars, pianos, saxophones and drums.

Now that President Bush has a healthy colon, he will probably go on to colonize Iraq.

nathan.ronald@gmail.com

Vista Land draws foreign interest amid lukewarm local market reception

By Daxim L. Lucas

SHARES OF PROPERTY FIRM VISTA Land and Lifescapes Inc. were highly sought after by the international investment community despite the lukewarm reception given to it by local investors, the issue's main underwriter said yesterday.

In a briefing, UBS chief country representative Lauro Baja III said the company raised $535 million—about P24 billion at prevailing exchange rates—from investors in what he described is the biggest equity offering in the country's history.

"This issue is five times oversubscribed," he said, saying that UBS recorded more than $2 billion worth of demand from the international market.

The official said the stock's attractiveness was due, in part, to the fact that it is in the process of shaking off the effects of the 1997 East Asian financial crisis.

"This is one of the very few companies which restructured its debt and come out successfully," he said.

Baja also pointed out that "over 120 investors" have bought the company's shares, which are set to be listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange on Thursday.

The company is selling 3.1 billion shares to the public at P6.85 apiece, which is the higher end of its P6 to P7 per share indicative price. Of this number, 2.1 billion shares would be new shares while the balance would be put on the market by existing shareholders.

Nonetheless, UBS Securities Philippines research head Jody Santiago conceded that the issue has generated more interest from the international market than domestic investors.

"There's a lot of misconception in the domestic market," he said, explaining that many local bankers are dismissive of the firm as simply a new firm to replace troubled Camella Homes.

"This is a new company and Camella Homes is only 20 percent of the revenue stream," he said.

Vista Land earlier said it would use the proceeds of the offering to finance capital expenditures in 2007 and 2008 amounting to P7.17 billion, settle loans worth P5.21 billion and set aside P800 million for working capital.

The budget will allow Vista Land to expand aggressively its operations and strengthen its market position. It intends to expand its housing operations in the provinces in a bid to double its geographic reach in the next two years.

CURRENCIES

July 23, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.723066	1.000000	44.8600
Japan	Yen	0.005962	0.008246	0.3699
United Kingdom	Pound	1.485973	2.055100	92.1918
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.092469	0.127884	5.7369
Switzerland	Franc	0.602103	0.832709	37.3553
Canada	Dollar	0.689553	0.953652	42.7808
Singapore	Dollar	0.478345	0.661551	29.6772
Australia	Dollar	0.636390	0.880127	39.4825
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.919015	2.653998	119.0584
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.192813	0.266660	11.9624
Brunei	Dollar	0.476768	0.659370	29.5793
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000080	0.000110	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.024264	0.033557	1.5054
UAE	Dirham	0.196902	0.272316	12.2161
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.383000	62.0414
Korea	Won	0.000790	0.001093	0.0490
China	Yuan**	0.095467	0.132031	5.9229
ArgentinaPeso	0.232684	0.321802	14.4360	
Brazil	Real	0.388745	0.537634	24.1183
Denmark	Kroner	0.134389	0.185860	8.3377
India	Rupee	0.017996	0.024888	1.1165
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212198	0.293470	13.1651
Mexico	New Peso	0.067040	0.092717	4.1593
New Zealand	Dollar	0.576056	0.796686	35.7393
Norway	Kroner	0.126291	0.174660	7.8352
Pakistan	Rupee	0.011971	0.016556	0.7427
South Africa	Rand	0.105403	0.145773	6.5394
Sweden	Kroner	0.109030	0.150789	6.7644
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022055	0.030502	1.3683

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—July 20, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of July 20, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 23, 2007)

52-WKS HIGH	52-WKS LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.3	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	51,000
73	30.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	70	70.5	70	70.5	21,600
73.5	51	Bank of the Philippine Islands	69.5	70.5	69.5	70.5	2,025,200
935	630	China Banking Corp.	885	885	880	885	1,930
20.25	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	400
0.63	0.37	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.54	2,760,000
75.5	35.5	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company	70	70.5	69	70	2,658,000
68	39	Philippine Savings Bank	63.5	64	63.5	63.5	4,600
39.57	14.13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	35	36	35	36	1,475,000
90	46.5	Security Bank Corp.	85	85.5	85	85	210,500
66	41.54	Union Bank of the Philippines	63	63.5	63	63.5	224,500
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.72	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	46,000
1.5	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.18	1.22	326,000
16.25	1.74	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.75	603,500
1.6	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.16	1.08	1.16	26,000
42	28	First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42	5,000
1,725.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,680.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	10
5	4.05	Nat'l Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.3	1,326,000
3.1	0.99	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	18,000
1,005.00	212	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	835	840	800	830	18,770
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,200.00	2,200.00	2,200.00	2,200.00	510
1.94	1.28	Vantage Corp	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	480,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	5.5	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.5	4,516,000
0.57	0.23	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.45	0.48	0.45	0.46	3,130,000
69.5	41.5	First Gen Corp.	67.5	68	67.5	68	84,100
92	41	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	87	89	87	88.5	212,100
15	7.6	Manila Water Company Inc.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.5	5,835,600
116	15	Manila Electric Company A	105	107	105	105	589,900
118	24	Manila Electric Company B	107	109	106	108	1,267,140
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.5	46,064,000
6.5	3.75	Petron Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	5,382,000
14.75	11.5	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.5	1,161,800
1.9	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil & Energy Dev't Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.48	990,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.7	283,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.22	2.22	388,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25.5	25	25.5	70,000
61	31.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	53	53	52	52.5	1,462,400
1.96	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.86	1.88	1.86	1.88	759,000
4.05	2.2	Roxas Holdings	2.6	2.6	2.55	2.55	167,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. A	73	74	73	74	63,900
88	69.5	San Miguel Corp. B	81.5	82	81.5	82	124,600
0.62	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.57	0.62	0.57	0.57	4,220,000
4.7	2	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.5	4.7	4.35	4.45	414,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	153,000
0.55	0.2	Vitarich Corp.	0.46	0.47	0.44	0.45	1,400,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	1.53	EEI Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	26,000
15	6	Federal Chemicals Inc.	11.5	12	11.5	12	8,700
9.2	4.3	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.8	805,000
7	1.26	Republic Cement Corp.	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.9	108,000
2	0.25	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.66	1.6	1.64	1,560,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.5	1,653,000
1.34	0.8	Interphil Laboratories Inc. A	1	1.08	1	1.08	22,000
1.4	0.61	Interphil Laboratories Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1	1	12,000
1.46	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	150,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.0675	Picop Resources Inc.	0.56	0.57	0.52	0.56	137,940,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.8	A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	167,000
0.17	0.023	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	33,110,000
1.28	0.195	APC Group Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.04	4,559,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. A	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	155,000
0.018	0.007	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. A	0.013	0.014	0.012	0.013	388,200,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	56,300,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.3	8.3	8.1	8.2	2,620,000
0.021	0.007	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.018	0.02	1,569,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6	4,819,000
1.38	0.48	Alsons Cons Resources Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.94	0.94	1,410,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.46	2.48	1,444,000
8	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5,000
590	333.33	Ayala Corp.	570	575	560	575	124,580
14.5	6.96	Bacnotan Cons Industries Inc.	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.75	5,000
6.9	0.8	Balabac Res and Holdings Co. Inc.	5.9	6.4	5.4	5.6	4,095,000
5.8	1.06	Benpres Holdings Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	8,264,000
10.25	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.4	9.6	9.4	9.6	133,000
2.02	0.7	F and J Princ.e Holdings Corp. A	1.9	1.92	1.9	1.92	179,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.4	484,000
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	4.25	4.35	3.65	3.65	1,315,000
0.8	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	50,000
0.95	0.13	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	300,000
11.5	0.26	Multitech Investments Corp.	8.3	8.3	7.9	8	1,827,000
30	0.88	NiHAO Minerals Res Int'l Inc.	24.25	24.25	22.75	22.75	357,600
8.2	1.3	PAL Holdings Inc.	7.5	8.2	7.5	8	3,897,000
1.54	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
0.75	0.17	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.6	0.65	0.6	0.64	26,220,000
452.5	202.36	SM Investments Corp.	445	445	435	440	137,790
2.2	0.71	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	5,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.53	7,810,000
1.06	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	150,000
1.6	0.8	South China Resources Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	1,000
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.6	0.66	0.6	0.62	68,880,000
1.1	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.77	0.8	0.76	0.8	300,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.78	A Brown Company Inc.	1.9	2.06	1.9	1.96	10,165,000
1.06	0.32	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.8	0.81	0.8	0.81	110,000
19.25	10.21	Ayala Land Inc.	17.75	18.25	17.75	18.25	3,851,000
1.88	0.99	Belle Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.58	1.58	562,000
0.86	0.27	Crown Equities Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
0.83	0.22	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.61	0.66	0.6	0.66	26,870,000
3.25	0.78	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	189,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.83	0.84	0.83	0.83	10,160,000
0.47	0.038	Ever Gotesco Res and Hold'gs Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.34	0.36	62,440,000
1.38	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.16	1.2	1.14	1.2	10,990,000
2.44	1.06	Filinvest Land Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.1	2.12	41,319,000
0.49	0.07	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	4,270,000
0.5	0.07	Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	1,880,000
3.3	2.16	Highlands Prime Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3,000
2.44	0.74	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	3,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.48	2,330,000
1.12	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.86	0.87	3,640,000
4.4	1.3	Megaworld Corp.	4.05	4.1	4	4.05	23,077,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	164,000
0.7	0.11	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.53	0.54	0.51	0.51	6,240,000
0.87	0.26	Phil. Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.68	10,970,000
9.2	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	82,000
23	10.75	Robinson Land Corp.	20	20.25	20	20.25	2,086,600
5.9	1.28	SM Development Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.9	1,303,000
13.5	6.08	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	13.25	13.25	12.75	12.75	5,533,400
1.34	0.55	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.99	1	0.95	1	1,570,000
0.49	0.0675	Univide Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.4	0.35	0.38	41,660,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	15.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	38	38	37.5	37.5	15,400
1.14	0.98	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	12,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.16	Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.52	2,622,000
1,445.00	960	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,360.00	1,365.00	1,360.00	1,365.00	22,290
2,820.00	1,890.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,690.00	2,690.00	2,675.00	2,685.00	138,070
7.9	3.45	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.3	1,453,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	22,940,000
12	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	10	10	9.8	9.8	4,000
10.5	2	IPVG Corp.	9.5	9.6	9.3	9.6	1,112,000
0.065	0.028	ISM Communications Corp.	0.046	0.047	0.045	0.047	113,800,000
29.5	6	Imperial Resources Inc. A	22.5	22.5	22	22	3,800
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	1,000
0.32	0.04	Island Info and Technology Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.235	0.235	76,950,000
2.08	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	40,000
0.0725	0.027	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.06	19,800,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Grp Int'l. Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.46	2.5	720,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.92	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	102,000
6.8	2.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	21,000
34.5	14	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	33	33.5	33	33	71,500
2.04	0.8	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.42	1.52	1.38	1.48	300,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.28	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.6	3.6	623,000
4.55	2.8	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	4	4	4	4	9,000
0.98	0.195	Premiere Entertainment Prod'n Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.74	0.74	510,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.92	0.96	670,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	67,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	25	25	25	25	1,000
6	1.9	Macroasia Corp.	5.7	5.9	5.5	5.6	2,408,000
17.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	238,400
30	9.9	Paxys Inc.	23.25	23.25	22.5	23	110,500
		MINING					
0.018	0.0075	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	79,000,000
7.6	3.65	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.6	796,000
7.7	3.65	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	442,000
21.25	7.5	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	15.5	16.25	15.5	16	8,814,400
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	10,000
5	1.76	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	4	4	4	4	63,000
3.1	0.0936	GEOGRACE Res. Philippines Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.85	33,089,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	15,250,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	2,650,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.03	30,500,000
0.041	0.019	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	11,700,000
0.024	0.009	Omico Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.018	0.02	633,900,000
6.4	3.15	Philex Mining Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	4,537,000
43	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	36.5	37	36.5	37	285,200
1.36	0.38	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	1,618,000
1.8	0.52	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	5,836,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.53	16,340,000
0.025	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.022	0.023	0.022	0.023	19,500,000
0.027	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	16,500,000
14.25	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	105,100
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	200,800,000

AVERAGES				VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	996.27	DOWN	0.66	35,923,280	1,229,833,405
Industrial	5,132.15	DOWN	1.75	221,022,240	885,082,370
Holding Firms	2,253.55	UP	0.03	2,186,373,970	430,685,585
Property	1,847.89	DOWN	1.87	271,488,000	489,405,495
Service	1,635.93	DOWN	3.16	244,764,960	485,862,240
Mining & Oil	6,784.54	UP	30.84	1,081,735,700	323,125,970
All Shares Index	2,419.38	DOWN	2.54		
PSEI	3,737.79	DOWN	0.49		
GRAND TOTALS				4,041,308,150	3,843,995,065

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

Revenue men cast wary eye on startup companies

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE has ordered its personnel to tighten their watch over operators of newly registered businesses, as it noted an increase in the number of firms that are suspected of using receipts for unscrupulous activities.

According to the BIR, some businesses registered with the tax-collecting agency are not legitimate.

The BIR, citing reports, said that the registrants would only use their authority to print official receipts and sales invoices, which they would then sell to companies who wish to declare fake input tax credits.

"These taxpayers are the kind who, upon inspection, cannot be located in their registered addresses, who intentionally do not file tax returns required of them by BIR as registered taxpayers, but have nevertheless conveniently utilized their BIR VAT-registered sales invoices/official receipts for fictitious and anomalous transactions in exchange for a price or a fee," the BIR said in a statement.

To address the problem, BIR officer in charge Lilian Hefti issued Revenue Memorandum Order (RMO) No. 14-2007, which requires bureau personnel to closely observe newly registered businesses.

The RMO specifically states that all new registrants, including new branches of pre-existing firms, shall be subjected to ocular inspection for a given month. This is to verify their physical existence in their registered addresses, and determine their legitimacy.

Businesses that are found to be no longer located in their registered addresses, the RMO adds, shall be subject to strict monitoring of their compliance to their obligations with the BIR, including the prompt filing of tax returns and payment of tax liabilities.

The RMO also imposes additional documentary requirements to pre-existing firms that are applying for new authority to print official receipts and sales invoices. These requirements include copies of their tax returns in the past 12 months, among others.

The BIR said that businesses found to be using receipts for illegal activities will face charges. The tax agency also warned companies that they would also be up for charges should they be caught using receipts sold to them by fly-by-night businesses.

The BIR's move to issue RMO No. 14-2007 followed the release of the government's fiscal report that indicated weak tax collection during the first half of the year.

The BIR was tasked to collect P373.3 billion in taxes in January to June, but only turned in P334.7 billion, resulting in a P38.6-billion shortfall.

Poor tax collection led Malacañang to let go of former BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Bunag and assign Hefti as officer in charge.

Hefti said the BIR would implement various measures to partly recover the shortfall in the first half and meet the monthly collection targets in the second half.

The BIR, the biggest revenue contributor to the government, has been tasked to collect a total of P765 billion in taxes this year.

From Japan, farm inputs set to reach RP farmers

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IS EXpecting by the end of the month the first shipment of fertilizer obtained under the $2.59-million Japan Grant Assistance for Underprivileged Farmers (2KR).

For this batch, 5,607 metric tons of ammonium sulphate is expected to arrive at the Seafront in Mariveles, Bataan.

The shipment forms part of the expected total volume of 15,607 metric tons of fertilizer, acquired under an aid grant which Japan approved last December to help small palay farmers.

The fertilizer would be initially distributed to rice farmers in Isabela, Cagayan and Nueva Ecija.

The Department of Agriculture has identified marginalized farmers using certified seeds and good seeds in irrigated and nonirigated upland and lowland areas as beneficiaries of the grant.

Bidding for the fertilizer began in Japan last April, and the delivery of the shipment is expected to be completed by September.

Ferex Agrochem Development Corp. is the consignee of the first shipment.

The Contract of Sale was awarded through a bidding conducted by the National Agricultural and Fishery Council, the agency in charge of the monetization and implementation of the grant assistance.

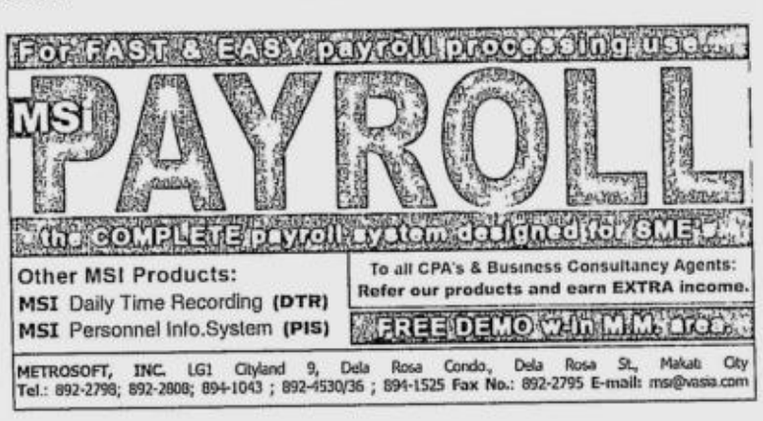
A 2KR recipient country like the Philippines is bound by an exchange of notes, which is a government-to-government memorandum of agreement, to monetize the commodities.

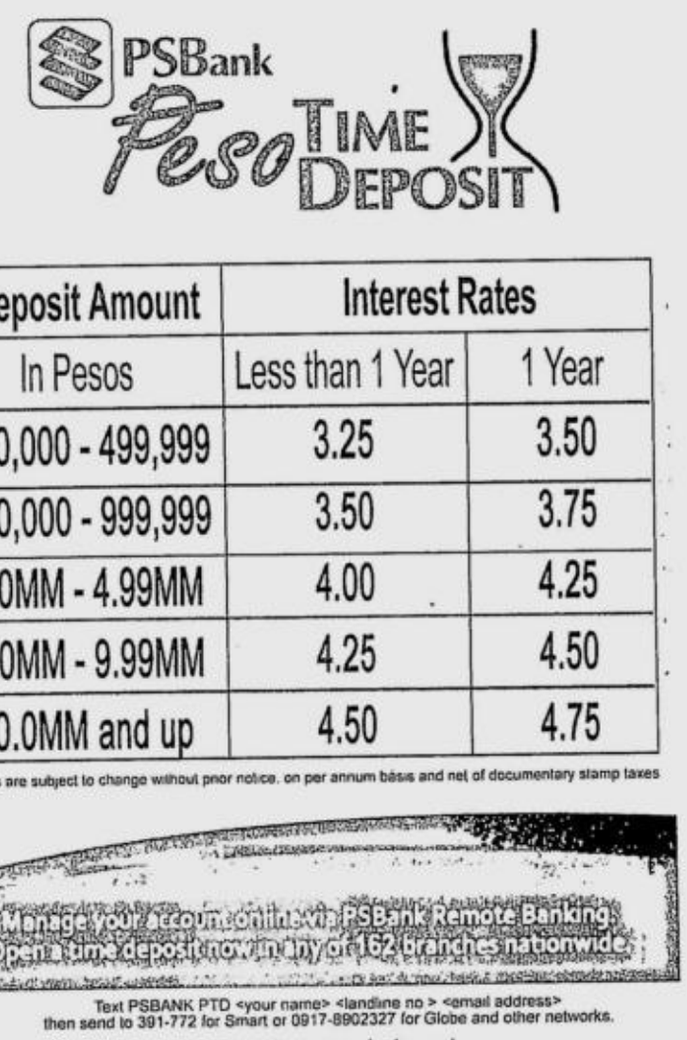
In the monetization phase, goods are disposed through open and competitive bidding among local fertilizer companies and cooperatives.

The Philippines, which has been a recipient of the Tokyo aid since 1977, was selected by Japan as one of six eligible countries.

Under the assistance program, Japan extends farm inputs to recipient countries in the form of fertilizer, agricultural chemicals and agricultural machinery.

To date, a total of 150 projects worth P6.45 billion have been funded by the Japan grant.





TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

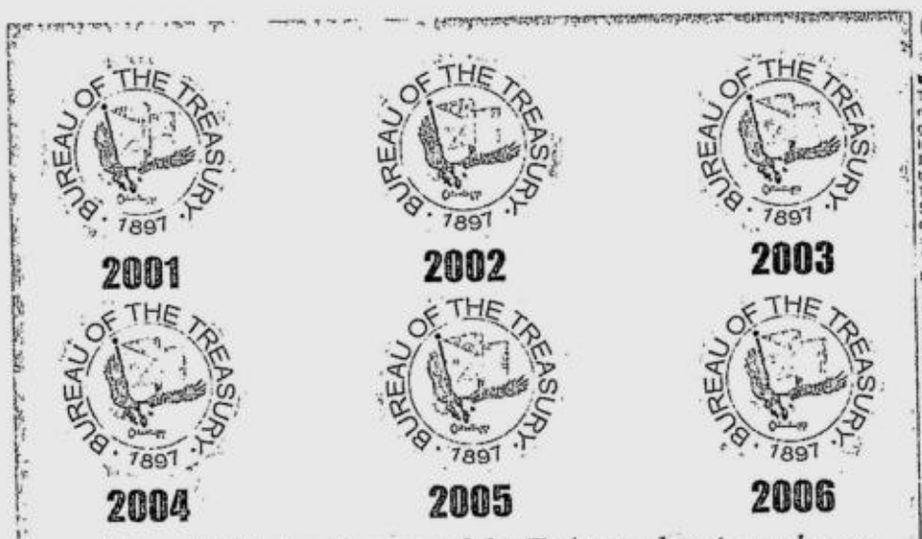
Supply and Delivery of Seven (7) Transmission Steel Towers and Line Materials Including Installation for the Restoration of Damaged Portion of the Naga – Tayabas 500kV Transmission Line (Sp07.TSTNTTL.LI-0109

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO)**, through its **Annual Corporate Budget**, intends to apply the sum of **Philippine Peso 99,971,000.00** for the Supply and Delivery of Seven (7) Transmission Steel Towers and Line Materials Including Installation for the Restoration of Damaged Portion of the Naga – Tayabas 500kV Transmission Line (Sp07.TSTNTTL.LI-0109) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the above packages. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening
2. TransCo now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the **Supply and Delivery of Seven (7) Transmission Steel Towers and Line Materials Including Installation for the Restoration of Damaged Portion of the Naga – Tayabas 500kV Transmission Line.** Delivery and Installation of the GOODS is required within **180 calendar days from contract effectivity**. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section 1B of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is open to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorship, organizations and to Foreign bidders whose country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine the bid's responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) determined after the conduct of the post-qualification evaluation.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **TRANSCO** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address stated in Item 10 starting **July 16, 2007** from **8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.**
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address stated below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of ***Philippine Peso 20,000.00***. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. **TRANSCO** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **August 8, 2007, 9:00 A.M.** at *C. U. Del Rosario Function Hall B & C, Power Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines.*
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the venue of the bid opening stated in Item 8 on or before **9:00 A.M.** of **August 22, 2007.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form and in the amount specified in Section III of the Bidding Documents, BDS. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be held on **August 22, 2007, 9:00 A.M.** at *C. U. Del Rosario Conference Hall B & C, Power Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.
9. **TRANSCO** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder/s.
10. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the BAC Secretariat at the following address:

Mr. Richard D. Nabong
Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department (BCMD)
Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building, Power Center
National Transmission Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road
1104 Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila, PHILIPPINES
Tel. Nos.: (632) 981-2308, 981-2212, 981-2213; Telefax No: (632) 981-2308
Email address: rdnabong@transco.ph
http://ww.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ATTY. NOEL Z. DE LEON
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – July 24, 2007)



Since 2001, the Bureau of the Treasury has issued over P300 Billion Retail Treasury Bonds.

Republic of the Philippines

3- and 5-YEAR RETAIL TREASURY BONDS DUE 2010 AND 2012

Offer Period: July 23 - 31, 2007

Issue Date: August 01, 2007

Minimum Investment: P5,000 and in multiples of P5,000 thereafter

Joint Issue Managers and Joint Issue Coordinators:

BPI Capital Corporation
For more information, please call:
845-5697; 816-9751; 845-5695

First Metro Investment Corporation
A Member of the Metrobank Group
For more information, please call:
241-4301-07; 840-5751-56; 840-3830

Investors' Briefing Schedules:
July 20, 2007, 3:00 p.m. Makati: Vigan Room, BPI Building
July 25, 2007, 3:00 p.m. Cebu: Marco Polo Plaza
July 26, 2007, 3:00 p.m. Davao: Marco Polo Davao

Q&A:

1. What are Retail Treasury Bonds (RTBs)?
The RTBs are part of the government's savings mobilization program designed to make government securities available to retail investors, hence, the name Retail Treasury Bonds. It is issued by the Republic of the Philippines through the Bureau of the Treasury (the "BTr"). This issue of the RTBs will have a maturity of 3 & 5 years. Interest or coupon payments will be paid quarterly compared to the regular Treasury Bonds which are paid semi-annually.

2. Why invest in RTBs?
The RTBs are designed to provide a safe, high-yielding and affordable savings instrument. RTBs are safe. They are considered risk-free because they constitute the direct, unconditional and general obligation of the Republic of the Philippines. RTBs are high-yielding, interest rates are superior to other investments. RTBs are affordable. The minimum denomination is only P5,000 and in multiples of P5,000 thereafter.

3. Who can purchase the RTBs?
The RTBs aim to cater to retail investors such as individuals and corporations who are looking for a safe, affordable and high-yielding investment for their savings.

4. Where and when can an investor purchase RTBs?
The RTBs will be sold to the public during the Public Offering (PO) which is scheduled from July 23-July 31, 2007. The PO is the designated period given to the public to subscribe to the RTBs, through the Issue Managers (First Metro Investment Corporation and BPI Capital Corporation) and the other Dealers. Since only a limited amount of RTBs shall be issued, the BTr has the option to shorten the PO period. Thus it will accept subscriptions for RTBs on a "first-come -first-serve basis." The terms and conditions applicable to the RTBs as well as copies of the complete documentation will be made available during the PO by each of the Issue Managers and Dealers. After the PO, investors may still purchase the RTBs in the secondary market at prevailing market rates.

5. How does an investor participate in the PO?
Investors may purchase the RTBs over the counter from the Dealer nearest them, subject to the documentary and minimum deposit requirements of each Dealer. Payment procedures for investment in RTBs may vary from one Dealer to another. In case investors do not have an existing deposit accounts with a Dealer, they will be required to open a peso deposit account or designate an existing peso account where interest payment and principal redemption of the RTBs will be credited.

6. What are the risks involved in investing in RTBs?
The RTBs are considered having the lowest credit risk because they represent the direct and unconditional obligation of the government thereby enjoying the highest certainty of payment. The yield is assured if the investor holds on to the bond until maturity, otherwise it will be subject to interest rate risk depending on the prevailing market rate at the time the RTBs are sold in the secondary market.

7. What is an investor's proof of ownership?
The Dealers will sell the RTBs to individuals and other investors on a non-recourse basis, documented through confirmations of outright sale (the "Confirmations of Sale") issued by the Dealer in favor of the investor. Investors may pick up these Confirmations of Sale a few days after the close of the PO from the offices of the Dealer. No certificate will be issued to investors as ownership by individuals and other investors will be registered electronically under the BTr's Registry of Scripless Securities.

8. Can an investor sell his investment in the RTBs after the Issue Date?
RTBs are considered marketable securities and have historically enjoyed a secondary market. The Dealer from whom the RTBs were purchased may assist the investor, on a best-efforts basis, in selling the RTBs in the secondary market at prevailing market rates.

9. Are there tax-free RTBs?
Interest income on RTBs is subject to the 20% final withholding tax. Only tax-exempt institutions duly-accredited by the Bureau of Internal Revenue are exempt from payment of the 20% final withholding tax.

Interim vehicle insurance system takes effect

Talks over new CTPL scheme still ongoing

By Michelle V. Remo

A TEMPORARY MOTOR VEHICLE insurance system will take effect tomorrow, as regulators remain undecided as to what scheme would be adopted to resolve the problems of fraud in the comprehensive third-partly liability (CPTL) insurance business.

Concerned agencies are in talks over which of the two proposed systems—one from the Department of Transportation and Communication and the other from the Insurance Commission—would be adopted to replace the current vehicle insurance scheme.

Under the interim measure, an individual registering his vehicle is required to first secure a CTPL policy from an insurance company of his choice.

Once a purchase is made, either the insurance firm or the broker/agent should send the required information electronically or through text messaging to the so-called Certificate of Cover Authenticating Facility (Cocaf), a system administered by the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association and Stradcom Corp., the information technology provider of the Land Transportation Office.

The required information include the COC number, plate number of the vehicle (if previously registered), engine number, chassis number, MV File number, inception and expiry dates, classification of registration, and notice that a CTPL policy has been bought to cover the said vehicle.

In the meantime, with his new CTPL policy, the vehicle owner may start applying for registration with the LTO which, in turn, will verify the authenticity of the insurance policy presented by the applicant by comparing it with the information fed to the Cocaf.

LTO personnel will input the insurance and vehicle information presented by the applicant into the Certificates of Cover Verification Facility (COCVF), also operated by Stradcom and used by the LTO in the verification process. COCVF will then electronically match the data it has with the data from the Cocaf.

In a statement, the Pira said that an error message would appear in the system if the information would not match. "If this happens, the vehicle owner should go back to the insurance firm where he bought the policy," it said.

The vehicle owner can also verify the authenticity of an insurance policy on his own by sending a text message directly to the Cocaf, the Pira said.

In a separate statement, the LTO said the interim measure would take effect following the expiration today of the contract of D-Tech Management Systems, the current provider of the LTO insurance verification system.

The DOTC, however, said its order "was not suspended" and the interim measure would be implemented while the concerned parties were working on an acceptable solution.

Department Order No. 2007-28 provides for the automatic granting of a CTPL insurance policy to anyone who would go to the LTO to register his vehicle. However, the same order provides that only one insurance company, a subsidiary of the Government Service Insurance System, will handle the entire CTPL business.

The DOTC's move to reform the CTPL system aims to address the rampant sale of fake insurance policies by illegitimate firms.

The order, however, was opposed by the Department of Finance, which sided with the Insurance Commission's position against a monopoly of the CTPL business . The commission has its own proposed system that calls for the establishment of a facility that will verify the authenticity of insurance policies.

An attached agency of the DOF, the Insurance Commission said there was a way to solve the problem without resorting to the creation of a monopoly.

Major attraction

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

HAVE YOU HEARD THAT, AMONG ALL Asean members, your own country (which, for the sake of action stars in the Senate, is the Philippines) has the most proven—again, that's "proven"—reserve of metallic and nonmetallic minerals?

Well, same here! In fact, I only got hold of such information from the most recent stock market report of a foreign financial group called Macquarie Equities.

The Australia-based stock brokering outfit placed our untapped mineral wealth at a fantastic amount of $840 billion.

A mere 10 percent of that estimate can already pay for all our foreign debts!

And who knows, if we can do more than 10 percent, we will also be a creditor of the US government, which actually owes every rich country in the world big time.

According to Macquarie, however, the government has issued mining permits covering only 1.5 percent of our total land area.

No wonder, the report talks of huge "potential" for mining exploration here.

Given up for dead in the past two decades, the mining sector is making a big comeback. As Macquarie said, it is a major attraction in the stock market nowadays.

The Macquarie report zeroed in on four local mining companies, namely, Philex, Lepanto, Atlas and Geograce.

Philex of course is the only profitable publicly listed mining firm today.

But Macquarie pointed out that Lepanto had rights over world-class copper deposit. Thus, its market potential lies in its ability to secure a joint venture partner. Okay—a "moneyed" foreign partner!

Atlas already brought its Berong nickel mine into full production and, just recently, made its first shipment to China.

As for today's market favorite Geograce, Macquarie said the company was aggressive in nickel projects, predicting that the firm would have one mine in operation in three to four years.

Macquarie said those four companies stood to benefit from the government's thrust to revitalize the sector.

Four years from now, based on the government economic plan, some 9 percent of the total GDP would come from the mining sector.

See, we really don't have to beg for foreign aid anymore.

***

Was the Malaysian group in the listed Philippine Racing Club or PRCI trying to pull a fast one on the local minority stockholders?

That seems to be the case. In fact, the Makati RTC already stopped the board of PRCI from taking away its 26-hectare prime property called the Sta. Ana racetrack.

Reportedly leading the majority group in PRCI is the Malaysian company called Magnum Holdings Berhad.

Under a swap deal, the board was to exchange the prime real estate property for paper—I mean, for shares in a moribund company called JTH Davies.

All right, such a swap deal happens everyday in the business world. It's just that the minority stockholders of PRCI complained that JTH Davies had been reporting huge losses in the past two years. As a matter of fact, it already reduced its capital from P200 million to P25 million.

Why would the directors of PRCI agree to such an obviously bad swap deal, at least bad for PRCI? And why was the deal kept away from the minority stockholders, who complained to the court that it lacked "full disclosure?" How could the Filipino members in the board leave the terms and conditions of the swap deal up to the so-called "executive committee?" And who are the members of this committee?

Among the directors of PRCI are former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, Santiago Cua Sr., Santiago Cua Jr., Solomon Cua and Exequiel Robles (who owns Sta. Lucia Realty).

Now, the Malaysian group have four seats in the board.

But PRCI must be so important to the Malaysian group that the chair of the Kuala Lumpur-based mother company himself must sit in the PRCI board—the one known as Datuk Surin Upatkoon.

The minority stockholders complained that the board's handling of the deal was ... well, "highly irregular."

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Apparently, in his bid to become the next environment and natural resources secretary, former Manila Mayor Lito Atienza found an endorser in former DENR boss Mike Defensor.

Nobody knows how effective such an endorsement can be from one who just lost miserably in the recent senatorial elections.

But the thing is, win or lose, Defensor has some valid points about the appointment of Atienza to the DENR, in an obvious effort to assuage the public about the environmental leaning of Mr. Hawaiian Shirt.

Look—Defensor does not even refer to Atienza as the staunchest defender of the current Malacañang tenant at the height of the public outcry for her resignation, even to the point that Atienza was willing to break up with his Liberal Party.

Defensor just points out that Atienza, as mayor of the dirty city called Manila, has a good record on the environment. For one, Atienza solved the garbage problem.

And then it was Atienza who fought for the so-called "green buffer" at the oil depot area in Pandacan, which should serve as protection to the residents. Today, some 28 of the oil companies' fuel tanks had already been dismantled. They moved the tanks to less populated areas.

Also according to Defensor, it was during Atienza's term as Manila vice mayor (and thus chair of the city council) when the council banned reclamation at the city portion of the Manila Bay.

Now, if only Defensor could have the pleasure of a similar endorsement for the Senate...

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In the Sona, the President is expected to highlight the "balanced budget" as one of her accomplishments. You know—things like low fiscal deficit!

The Arroyo administration can gloat all it wants about the terrific increase in government revenues, which it estimated at P978 billion for 2006, but the biggest increase in revenue still came from the Bureau of Internal Revenue, whose former chief (Jose Mario Buñag) the same administration just booted out.

How could she take out somebody who actually provided her the biggest item for her Sona drumbeating? I mean, is this another example of GMA saying one thing and doing another? Looks like it!

Eton Properties starts Ortigas condo project

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LUCIO TAN-OWNED ETON Properties Inc. yesterday launched its 1,000-unit condominium project in Ortigas, Pasig City, the third of its seven projects which were estimated to cost P10 billion.

Eton president Danilo Ignacio said "Emerald Lofts"—which will consist of two towers with 500 units each—would cater to Filipino-Americans, businessmen and parents buying homes for their children.

The 41-story towers feature all-loft units, with the ceiling measuring 17 feet from the floor.

Eton will offer one-bedroom (35 to 40 sq.m.) and two-bedroom (56 to 83 sq.m.) units. Prices range from P2.3 million to P3 million for the single bedroom types and P3.5 million to P6 million for the two-bedroom types.

Construction of the project will start in September 2008 and is targeted for completion in December 2011.

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur C. Yap (2nd from left) examines the tropical abalone raised in concrete tanks in the hatchery of Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center's aquaculture department in Tigbauan, Iloilo. With Secretary Yap are (left to right) AQD chief Joebert Toledo, Bureau of Fisheries Aquatic Resources director Malcolm Sarmiento and National Irrigation Administration head Marcelino V. Tugaoen Jr.

Honda posted biggest market share in June

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES INC. SAID IT had dominated the local passenger car market in June with a share of 37 percent.

The sales report released by the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines showed that Honda accounted for 1,207 out of the industry's total passenger car sales in June of 3,262 units.

Honda's flagship model, the Civic, accounted for 66 percent of the company's total passenger car sales in June. It remained the bestseller in its class with 3,763 units sold year-to-date, higher by 115 percent than that of its closest rival.

In the meantime, the City and the Jazz accounted for 18 percent and 15 percent of Honda's passenger car sales, respectively. The Jazz posted a 25- percent sales growth, but the City suffered a 42-percent decline in sales due to low stock levels.

Year-to-date sales of the entire PC industry was up 6 percent from year-ago level at 19,052 units. Honda completed the first half of the year with 6,442 unit sales, or 34 percent of the market. This was 23 percent higher than the company' sales in the same period last year.

PLDT targeting 2M in additional subscribers

By Riza T. Olchondra

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEphone Co. is aiming at getting two million in additional subscribers by the end of the year.

PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno said in an interview that the company, after recording more than 27 million subscribers in the second quarter, was set to win more subscribers with its new offerings. PLDT is confident of hitting this target given the general improvement in the economy.

To further diversify services and promote customer loyalty, PLDT unit Smart Communications Inc. launched with IBM Philippines a new self-service reloading system called Load Connect.

Subscribers can use Load Connect to purchase airtime in P30, P60, P300, P500 and P1,000 denominations as well as reload their Smart Money accounts.

PLDT consumer affairs head Claro Carmelo P. Ramirez said Load Connect was the phone company's latest initiative under Smart Connect, a program that will shorten the time spent by subscribers in buying airtime and reloading their Smart Money accounts at the wireless center.

Load Connect is also the first service in Asia that allows mobile users to load airtime and money via a machine that accepts and recycles multiple bills.

IBM, for its part, said it was glad to partner with the PLDT unit to push innovation in the market.

"Innovation must somehow redound to the benefit of the end-user and we are glad to partner with Smart to enable their subscribers with the use of available technology," IBM Philippines general manager James G. Velasquez said.

Load Connect is initially available in 15 Smart wireless centers nationwide. The self-service reloading machine is one of the several initiatives under Smart Connect, which include SIM Connect, Web Connect, SagotAgad and Zone Connect.

CebuPac slashes fares by 65%

CEBU PACIFIC, THE AIRLINE OF JG SUMMIT Holdings Inc., has reduced its year-round 'Go' fares for most of its domestic routes effective July 20, 2007.

The one-way fare for the Manila-Laoag, Manila-Legaspi and Cebu-Iloilo services were slashed by more than 65 percent. The lowest fares for these routes now start from P99. Including taxes and surcharges, one-way fares are less than P900.

One-way year-round fare from Manila to most Visayas destinations was reduced by nearly 50 percent, from P568 to P288. One-way fares for Manila to Tagbilaran and Tacloban were cut by almost 60 percent from P688 to P288. The all-inclusive year-round fare for this group is now less than P1,300 one-way.

One-way fare for services from Manila to any Mindanao destination was reduced by more than 30 percent from P998 to P688. This is equivalent to an all-inclusive one-way fare of about P2,000.

Candice Iyog, CEB VP for marketing and product, said the fare cut was aimed at stimulating air travel in the country.

"We've seen how our earlier seat sales have successfully enticed people to travel so now we're making these fares available all year-round. We also want to reward those people who book ahead of time."

Public sector recorded surplus of P8.35B in Q1

THE IMPROVED FINANCIAL PERFORmance of state-owned companies has allowed the entire public sector to post a rare budget surplus in the first quarter.

The Department of Finance yesterday said the consolidated public sector fiscal position (CPSF) posted P8.35 billion in surplus in the first three months, a turnaround from the deficit of P33.2 billion in the same period last year.

Sources said this was much better than expected as the government had projected a CPSF deficit of P48.2 billion for the first quarter. The surplus was equivalent to 0.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The surplus was attributed mainly to the 14 government-owned and -controlled corporations monitored by the DOF, which reported a combined surplus of P19.91 billion, higher than the P1.9 billion last year.

Other surplus items in the CPSF included the 18.894 billion reported by social security institutions, composed of the Social Security System, the Government Service Insurance System and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. In the first quarter last year, these institutions posted a surplus of P12.32 billion.

Government financial institutions, including Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines, recorded a P3.161-billion surplus from only P471 million a year ago.

Local government units (LGUs) posted a surplus of P23.197 billion, better than year-ago's P20.23 billion.

The P1.583 billion worth of adjustments to the previous computation of net lending to GOCCs by the national government was also considered a surplus item in the CPSF.

However, the CPSF surplus was pulled down to only P8.3 billion by the P51.2-billion budget deficit posted by the national government during the three-month period.

Expenses for the payment of the old central bank's debts, placed at P1.99 billion, was also a deficit item in the CPSF.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas also incurred a budget deficit of P3.97 billion, higher than the P1.95 billion recorded in the same period last year. Some P518 million worth of adjustments to previous computations were also added to the deficit items in the CPSF.

Finance officials said the surplus in the CPSF in the first quarter sustained the positive fiscal performance of the public sector since last year.

Since the late 1990s up to 2005, the government had been recording deficits in the CPSF, largely because of poor tax collection by the national government, and partly by weak financial management of GOCCs. *Michelle V. Remo*

Japan auto makers to resume production

TOKYO—MORE THAN HALF OF Toyota's shuttered assembly lines will start running again Tuesday, and carmakers Mazda and Honda plan to restart production as well, after a key parts supplier damaged by a major earthquake resumed operations Monday.

Factories of Toyota Motor Corp. and other major Japanese auto makers have been shut because of a lack of parts following the damage to piston-ring maker Riken Corp.'s plant in Kashiwazaki, in north-central Japan, near the epicenter of the magnitude 6.8 earthquake on July 16.

Riken restarted production of some auto parts on Monday after workers replaced damaged equipment and restored the factory's gas and water supplies, a company spokesperson said on condition of anonymity, citing protocol.

"We resumed production today, although there is a delay in some lines," Riken said in a statement.

Production of key parts, including piston rings and seal rings, have nearly returned to normal, the company added.

Toyota said Monday 20 of its 31 auto assembly lines will be running by Tuesday, although later plans were still undecided.

Toyota's 12 factories in Japan have suspended operations since Thursday.

WORKERS at the Riken auto parts factory in Kashiwazaki, Niigata Prefecture, are back on the production line after the facility was damaged during an earthquake on July 16. REUTERS

The suspension has resulted in an output loss of about 46,000 vehicles, according to Toyota.

Mazda Motor Corp., an affiliate of Ford Motor Corp., will start operations Monday evening at one of two factories in Japan, according to spokesperson Aya Takahashi.

The other factory will resume work Tuesday, she said. The company's output loss from the suspension is 4,500 vehicles, she said.

Honda Motor Co. also said Monday that two of its automobile plant and a motorcycle factory will resume production Tuesday. Two other auto production plants will remain closed, Honda said.

Nissan Motor Co. has halted some plants through Tuesday.

Mitsubishi spokesperson Tetsuji Inoue said the company plans to announce later Monday whether it will resume production at its three domestic plants from Tuesday. The company has said it planned to halt most operations through Monday. *AP*

Toyota keeps sales target of 9.3M vehicles for '07

TOKYO—TOYOTA WILL HOLD to its global sales target of 9.34 million vehicles for this year, despite worries about a sluggish Japanese market, the company president said Monday.

Toyota Motor Corp., which this year for the first time ever beat General Motors Corp. as the world's No. 1 auto maker in global vehicle sales for the first half of the year, set that target late last year.

President Katsuaki Watanabe told reporters he was holding that number unchanged so far, although reviews were underway for all the regions.

"At this time, we have no plans to change them," he said at a Tokyo hotel.

Toyota's booming sales come at a time when it is seeing sales grow in the US and other global markets.

Soaring gas prices have made Toyota's fuel-efficient models popular, including its hybrid Prius and small cars like Corolla and Vitz, also known as the Yaris.

Outlining the company's mid-year strategy, Watanabe said Toyota will contribute more to efforts against global warming and pollution by working on new technologies, including plug-in hybrids.

Other auto makers, including GM, are working on developing plug-in hybrids, which have batteries that power an electric motor, with an internal combustion engine for use when the batteries run low.

The batteries can be recharged by plugging them into a standard wall outlet.

More common hybrids already in production, such as the Prius, switch between an electric motor and gas engine to deliver better mileage. They don't need to be plugged in to recharge because they recharge the motor as they run, converting the energy from the wheels and braking.

Toyota said in June sales of its hybrid cars had passed one million vehicles, a landmark for the auto maker that started selling the Prius a decade ago and now dominates the hybrid market.

Toyota's 2007 sales target marks a 6-percent rise from 8.8 million vehicles in 2006, and would be the ninth straight year of global sales growth for Toyota.

GM does not give forecasts for full-year auto production or sales. The Detroit-based auto maker sold 9.1 million vehicles worldwide in 2006. *AP*

Oil falls; Opec concerned about world economy

Supply worries loom; cartel said to be ready to pump more oil if needed

SYDNEY—OIL PRICES FELL ON Monday on expectations of higher US refinery production and after remarks by Opec that it is ready to pump more oil if needed.

London Brent crude, currently seen as more representative of the world market, slid 60 cents to $77.04 a barrel by 0807 GMT, after easing 3 cents on Friday.

US crude for September traded 42 cents lower at $75.37.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is concerned about the potential impact of near-record oil prices on the world's economy, but has seen little sign that higher energy costs have hit growth, the group's president said on Sunday.

Opec stands ready to pump more oil if needed, but it is not clear whether the group will need to boost output before the end of the year, Opec president and United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Mohammed al-Hamli told Reuters in an interview on Sunday.

But analysts said Opec's comments are unlikely to have a lasting impact on oil prices as supply worries continue to loom.

"We have seen those comments from Opec for the last three years, and it seems like these are merely attempts to reassure the market that supply will be available," said Gerard Burg, an oil and gas analyst at National Australia Bank.

"These comments does not mean that there is going to be a change in Opec policies or a move to increase supply soon," Burg added.

Despite supply concerns and surging oil prices, Opec has yet to relax supply curbs in place since last November.

Global economies are proving resilient to surging energy prices and oil consumption has remained strong.

Economic growth in China, the world's second largest oil consumer, accelerated to 11.9 percent in the second quarter, an 11 1/2-year high, though Reuters calculations show apparent oil demand growth was more tepid at 2.1 percent in June.

Crude imports by China still rose nearly 20 percent in June from a year-ago, while imports by South Korea, the world's fourth largest buyer, rose 3.8 percent in June.

Analysts said oil prices were also pulled down by a report which cited Opec's research division as saying that a fair price for both oil producers and consumers would be around $60 to $65.

"A price of $60 to $65 is appropriate for consumers and producers, because it boosts means of investment in the oil industry in light of growing demand for oil in the coming years," state firm Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's monthly newsletter quoted the head of Opec's research division as saying.

News of Chevron Corp. restarting a 200,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) crude distillation unit at its Los Angeles-area refinery in California also weighed on prices.

The recent gain in oil prices has been supported by rising demand in United States and a spate of refinery outages that have drained inventories in the world's top consumer.

A report released by the United States government last week showed gasoline stocks unexpectedly fell by 2.3 million barrels in the week to July 13. *Reuters*

Asia shares lose steam over US mortgage crisis

SINGAPORE—THE DOLLAR FELL TO A record low against the euro on Monday and Asian shares lost steam after last week's rally, hit by escalating fears of a global spillover from the US mortgage crisis.

Safe-haven Japanese and US government bonds traded at six-week highs as edgy investors shunned riskier assets.

The weaker dollar hit Asian exporters such as Canon Inc. and Honda Motor, with overall sentiment also soured by losses on Wall Street and caution after China raised interest rates on Friday in another attempt to prevent economic overheating.

Gold traded near Friday's 10-week highs, underpinned by the soft dollar and heightened financial markets uncertainty.

European shares are seen extending Friday's losses. Spread betters in London expect Britain's FTSE 100 index to open between one point lower and four points higher, Germany's DAX 11-15 points down and France's CAC 40 7-10 points lower.

"There's some concern that the Dow will now resume its drift away from those all-time highs above 14,000 and any selling on Wall Street will have the potential to weight further on stocks this side of the Atlantic," said Matt Buckland, trader at CMC Markets.

Tokyo's Nikkei fell 1.1 percent to four-week closing low, led lower by exporters such as Canon Inc., which fell 1.3 percent and Honda Motor, down 2 percent.

Japan's top construction machinery maker Komatsu fell 1.3 percent after disappointing results from industry leader Caterpillar Inc.

Mixed earnings on Friday sapped Wall Street optimism about corporate profits and brought US debt market fears to the fore again, knocking more than one percent off main stock indexes

Beijing's interest rate rise also weighed on firms exposed to the Chinese market, such as South Korea's steel maker Posco, by raising the prospect of softer demand from the world's fourth biggest economy.

But gains by leading banks such as Kookmin Bank helped drive the main Kospi index up 0.5 percent to another all-time high.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets largely took China's long-awaited rate rise and Wall Street losses in their stride, pushing the MSCI's measure of Asia Pacific performance outside of Japan up 0.3 percent to a record high.

Australia and Singapore underperformed, down 0.5 and 0.4 percent respectively, while Hong Kong edged up 0.1 percent and Taiwan rose 0.4 percent.

Japanese government bonds hit a six-week high tracking gains in US bonds on Friday after investors dumped stocks and flocked to the safety of government debt.

Fears that losses in the US subprime mortgage market, which targets poor credit borrowers, may hurt consumption and sap growth in the world's biggest economy continue to send ripples through world markets, pushing the dollar lower.

The US currency hit another all-time low against the euro of around $1.3845 in early Asian trading on Monday and at 0600 GMT hovered just above that level.

The dollar also hit a six-week low against the yen at 120.80 yen on the electronic trading platform EBS. Some traders attributed the yen's rise to the unwinding of carry trades, where investors borrow in low-yielding currencies such as yen to invest in riskier, but higher-yielding assets. *Reuters*

Barclays raises bid for ABN Amro to $93.4B

AMSTERDAM—ABN AMRO, WHICH received two revised offers from rival bidders Barclays and a consortium led by Royal Bank of Scotland, said on Monday that it will evaluate both offers in "a fair and transparent manner."

Barclays earlier on Monday revised its offer for ABN to include more cash.

The 67.5-billion euro ($93.4 billion) Barclays bid will be comprised of 42.7 billion euros in shares and 24.8 billion euros in cash.

The consortium of RBS, Fortis and Santander is offering 71 billion euros for ABN, mostly in cash.

"ABN Amro welcomes the opportunity for shareholders to consider two competing proposals on a level playing field," ABN said in a statement.

The BBC reported on Monday that Barclays is in talks with the governments of China and Singapore to raise 10 billion pounds ($20.6 billion) to help fund its planned purchase of Dutch bank ABN.

A deal could put an end to the three-month bidding war for ABN and result in the world's biggest bank takeover.

Barclays' former all-share offer for ABN was rivaled by a higher, mostly cash bid by the consortium led by Royal Bank of Scotland.

Citing unidentified banking sources, the BBC said on its website www.bbcnews.com that if the talks succeeded, China would hold a 7-percent stake in the merged bank, while Singapore would own 3 percent through its investment holding company, Temasek.

But an industry source, who declined to be identified, cautioned against assuming—as the BBC report did—that China's newly formed investment authority was the institution investing in Barclays.

Other banking sources floated the name of China Development Bank, one of the country's three policy-driven lenders, as the institution that might buy into Barclays.

The Wall Street Journal, citing people familiar with the matter, said Barclays was close to an agreement to sell what it described as a large stake to Temasek and another investor to help back its bid for ABN.

The newspaper said on its www.wsj.com website that, while the size of Temasek's potential stake in Barclays was not clear, a Barclays stake of 5 percent to 10 percent would be worth about $4.8 billion to $9.6 billion, based on Barclays's market value.

Flush with $1.33 trillion in foreign exchange reserves, China has made no secret of its intention to diversify its portfolio of foreign holdings, which is now concentrated in government assets, and is expected to be an increasingly active source of global funding.

European politicians, meanwhile, nervous about prize domestic assets being bought up by increasingly powerful state investment agencies in countries such as China, Russia and the United Arab Emirates, have spoken openly about possible legislation to ward off unwanted suitors.

Spokespersons for Temasek and Barclays declined to comment.

If Barclays fails in its improved bid to buy ABN, the newly formed Chinese investment authority and Temasek would instead take smaller stakes in Barclays, the BBC said.

The deal is being arranged with the help of US private equity firm Blackstone, which in May sold a $3-billion stake in itself to the Chinese state, it said. Blackstone shares have lost more than 16 percent of their value since the company's stock was listed in New York on June 22. *Reuters*

China inflation risk not serious, says economist

BEIJING—CHINA IS NOT FALLING INTO A period of significant inflation, even though consumer prices rose by a 33-month-high annual rate of 4.4 percent in June, a National Bureau of Statistics official said in comments published on Monday.

China's central bank on Friday raised interest rates for the third time this year, saying it was doing so in part to maintain price stability.

"I don't think China has entered a stage of serious inflation," Yao Jingyuan, chief economist at the National Bureau of Statistics, was quoted by the China Economic Times as saying.

The Beijing-based newspaper is run by a think-tank affiliated with the State Council, China's cabinet.

Yao's comments echo those made last week by the statistics agency's spokesperson, Li Xiaochao.

In assessing the jump in the consumer price index beyond the government's comfort level of 3 percent, Li said that core CPI in the first half, stripping out food and energy, remained below one percent. *Reuters*

No telling how heirs to Dow Jones will vote

NEW YORK—WHEN THE BANCROFT family meets Monday to consider Rupert Murdoch's $5 billion bid for Wall Street Journal publisher Dow Jones & Co., relatively few of them will actually be named Bancroft.

There will be a Hill, a Steele, the family's lead trustee, who is named Elefante, and yes, at least one Bancroft, first name Christopher. Other family members have last names that include Cox, Robes and MacElree.

And if their names are hard to keep track of, it has been just as hard trying to predict the outcome of their vote about Dow Jones. They initially rejected Murdoch's offer out of hand, but then agreed to meet with him and eventually won assurances that he would not meddle with the paper's news coverage. Further complicating efforts to divine their leanings, the clan has not had a clear leader since the death in 1982 of Jessie Bancroft Cox.

The Bancroft clan has become large and far-flung since 1902, when Boston newspaperman Clarence W. Barron bought control of the company founded 20 years earlier by Charles Dow, Edward Jones and Charles Bergstresser. Control then passed to Barron's adopted daughter, Jane Barron, who married Hugh Bancroft, and on to their descendants.

Today, the family that controls Dow Jones and its flagship, The Wall Street Journal, is in its sixth generation, with some three dozen adult members spread out across the country.

After the initial meeting Monday in Boston, the family is expected to take several days to consider Murdoch's bid. If enough of them commit to endorsing a deal, the process moves to final approval by the boards of Dow Jones and News Corp., the global media conglomerate that Murdoch controls.

News Corp. owns newspapers in Australia and the UK, including The Sun and The Times of London, as well as the New York Post, Fox News Channel, Twentieth Century Fox and MySpace.

The family has long had a hands-off approach to the company, entrusting its day-to-day operations to management.

So far, key family members have not spoken publicly about their leanings, but Chris Bancroft told the Journal in May that he was opposed to Murdoch's offer, saying the paper would be less independent under him.

Bancroft was also reported to have left a key board meeting early Tuesday where Murdoch's bid was endorsed. The company has not commented on what happened at that meeting.

The family receives a meaningful amount of income from their holdings in Dow Jones stock. Collectively they own 16.5 million of the company's supervoting Class B shares, representing about 82 percent of the class, which is not traded publicly. Dow Jones paid dividends of $1 per share in each of the past two years.

Combined with the 63.7 million common shares outstanding, which anyone can buy on the New York Stock Exchange, that means Dow Jones paid out more than $80 million in dividends last year and the year before. *AP*

JESUS C. SISON

(Journalist and former Press Secretary and MTRCB Chairman during the term of Pres. Fidel V. Ramos)

passed away in the Grace of Our Lord on July 21, 2007 at the age of 76.

His loving wife, **AMY SISON**, children and children-in-law **Paul and Milen de Quiros, Jiji and Susan Sison, Andy and Iza Bueza, Jera and Red Sison** and grandchildren **Mikey, Katrina, Mylene, Jeska, Carissa, Julian, Justin, Jelissa, Ramona, Jade** and **Jam** request relatives and friends to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 3C, Nacional Memorial Homes (Funeraria Nacional), Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Necrological Services will be held on Thursday, July 26, 2007, at 8:00 p.m. On Saturday, July 28, 2007, mass will be held at 8:00 a.m. at Funeraria Nacional, after which cremation will follow at the Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

In Loving Memory

TWENTY SEVENTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

of

RECIO M. GARCIA

who passed away on July 24, 1980.

Holy Masses will be offered at the following churches today:

Christ the King Divine Word Mission Seminary 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Blvd., Quezon City	6:30 AM	Sacred Heart Parish 28 Scout Ybardolaza St., Kamuning, Q.C.	7:30 AM
Christ the King Bgy. Veteran's Village, Proj. 7, Q.C.	7:15 AM	Minor Basilica and National Shrine of San Lorenzo Ruiz (Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary) Plaza Lorenzo, Binondo, Manila	7:30 AM
Franciscan Philippine Province San Francisco Del Monte, Q.C.	5:30 AM	Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish 27 Scout Ybardolaza St., Kamuning, Q.C.	7:00 AM
Immaculate Conception Cathedral Parish 39 Lantana Street, Cubao, Quezon City	6:00 AM	Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace (Our Lady of EDSA) EDSA corner Ortigas Avenue, Q.C.	6:30 AM
Mount Carmel Shrine Doña Juana Rodriguez Avenue New Manila, Quezon City	7:00 AM	St. Paul the Apostle Parish #3 Timog Ave. cor. Mother Ignacia St., Brgy. Laging Handa, Quezon City	7:00 AM
National Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes Kanlaon cor. Retiro Street, Quezon City	7:30 AM	Sta. Cruz Parish Blessed Sacrament Fathers & Brothers 1099 Sta. Cruz, Manila	8:00 AM
Nativity of the Lord Parish 151 Ermin Garcia St., Cubao, Q.C.	6:30 AM	Sta. Maria della Strada Katipunan Road, Quezon City	6:00 AM
Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene Parish of St. John the Baptist 910 Plaza Miranda, Quiapo, Manila	7:00 AM	Sta. Teresita Del Niño Jesus 43 Kanlaon St., Sta. Mesa, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Our Lady of Loreto J. Figueras St., Sampaloc, Manila	6:00 AM	Sto. Niño Parish Shrine Bukidnon St., Bago Bantay, Q.C.	6:00 AM

Our dear Tata...

RAYMUNDO O. BANTUG, SR.

WWII Veteran, Death March Survivor
USAFFE OFFICER, Businessman
Former VICE MAYOR, MACABEBE, PAMPANGA

Peacefully joined the Lord on July 21, 2007 at the age of 90.

His loving wife **FORTUNATA**; children **BOY, ENING, NONONG, CELY, GUYDO, LALLYN, ROLLY**, their spouses, children and grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the **Nacional Memorial Homes, # 264 G. Araneta Ave., Q.C.** He will be transferred to **Macabebe, Pampanga on July 26, 2007 at 9:00 AM.**

Interment will be on **Sunday, July 29, 2007** at the **San Isidro Cemetery, Macabebe, Pampanga.**

Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.

We accept death notices, announcing details of the person's wake and interment. For a very affordable fee you can reach out to everyone who have been a part of the life of your dearly departed. For more information, you may contact Inquirer Classifieds at (02)897 8425.

"God wanted me now;
He set me free."

Erundina "Nitang" Fernandez Lim

Passed peacefully into God's arms on July 21, 2007.

She continues to live on in the hearts and minds of her husband, **Ting**, and her children - **Susie & Ching Yap, Lit & Susan Lim, Mari Lim, Vicky & Jos Ortega,** her grandchildren - **Vincci, Bea & Cara,** her beloved sisters - **Eloisa Yan & Zita Feliciano,** her stepmother, **Tess Fernandez**, brothers- and sisters-in-law, close family and friends whose lives she touched and enriched.

All request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.
Her remains are at the Capilla dela Virgen, Sanctuario de San Antonio until July 24, 2007.

Interment will be on Wednesday, July 25, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at the Basilica of St. James the Great, Lower Chapel.

Sister NIEVES JOVEN VALDÉS, ICM

died in the Grace of our Lord on July 22, 2007, at the age of 85 in the 56th year of her religious missionary life.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM Sisters), her family and friends request the readers to pray for her.

The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on July 25, 2007 at 8:00 A.M. at the Queen of Peace Chapel, 61 Banawe St., Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (I.D.)

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Psalm 23:4

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announce with sorrow the demise of its founding
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GERONIMO ZAMORA VELASCO

who peacefully joined his Creator on July 16, 2007.

We extend our deepest sympathies and prayers to his beloved wife, **Erlinda Faustino**, children **Urbano** & **Ramona Favis, Ma. Paz Amparo** & **Oliverio Laperal Jr., Geronimo Jr.** & **Felicia Trinidad, Ma. Luisa Velasco** and **Miguel** & **Lailani Mendoza** and grandchildren.

His body will lie in wake at the Santuario de San Antonio, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City beginning 12:00 noon, July 25, 2007. His remains will be at the PNOC Building 5, Merritt Road, Energy Center, Bonifacio Global City on July 26, 2007, from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. with necrological services at 1:30 p.m., after which his remains will be brought back to Santuario de San Antonio.

Interment will be on July 28, 2007 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City after the 9:00 a.m. funeral Mass.

Readers are requested to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

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"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

JOSE MIACO REMO

August 22, 1928 – June 24, 2007

express our heartfelt gratitude to those who condoled with us, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, cards and messages of sympathy, gave donations, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and memorial services, and who in countless ways helped and comforted us during our moments of bereavement.

Please continue to pray for his eternal repose in heaven.

"God be with you on your journey home. We will miss you dearly."

JACINTO Y. TAN

peacefully joined his Creator on July 20, 2007 at the age of 70.

His bereaved wife, **Alice Tan**; children **Christine** & **Michael Sy, Jackson, Joy** & **Mark Yu, Karen, Mary** & **George**; grandchildren **Matthew Yu, Charlize** and **Maxine Sy**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel-7, South Wing Bldg., La Funeraria Paz, Inc., Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be held on July 26, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. in Paz Crematory.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF WAKE	INTERMENT/CREMATION DATE & TIME	INTERMENT/CREMATION PLACE
Rafael "Apeng" S. Soriano	Chapel – D	25-July-07 10:00 AM	Himlayang Pilipino
Jacinto Y. Tan	Chapel – 7	26-July-07 11:00 a.m.	Paz Crematory

ERRATUM

In the advertisement of **Petron Corporation** re: obituary of **Geronimo "Ronnie" Zamora Velasco** published on July 23, 2007, the birth date of the deceased should have read **October 6, 1927** and not as published.

Corazon Gonzales Reyes

October 12, 1927 - July 18, 2007

A Great Woman, A Devoted Mother

Born in Bocaue, Bulacan, passed away in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Survived by her husband, **Simeon M. Reyes**, her children and their spouses, **Victor** & **Corazon, Cesar** & **Wanda, Oscar** & **Aurora, Carolina** & **Dana, Crispino** & **Ahzel, Ramon** & **Bessie, Irene, Cecilia** & **Fredy, Reynaldo** & **Pinky**, and **Florentino**, her nineteen grandchildren, and one great-grandson.

She will lie in state at Christ the King Chapel, Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City, starting at 8:00 p.m. on July 25, 2007 and continuing through July 26, 2007.

Her remains will be brought to her home in Tumana, Sta. Maria, Bulacan after the 8:00 a.m. Memorial Mass at Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, Friday, July 27, 2007.

Funeral Mass will be at Immaculada Conception Church, Sta. Maria, Bulacan, at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, July 28, 2007.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul.

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CELEBRITY endorser Kris Aquino JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

'I won't be true to myself if I promote something that I myself would not use or undergo'

Kris finds the right one

By Alex Y. Vergara

KRIS AQUINO HAS bared her soul on television too often enough on anything and everything involving her public and private affairs, even the cosmetic surgeries she has had like liposuction and breast augmentation.

But, as brave and daring as she is, the celebrity host draws the line at invasive cosmetic procedures on her face. If anything went wrong, she once said about liposuction and the like, you could always cover your body.

But there was no way to hide a disfigured face from the public.

Except for regular cleaning and facials, Aquino has kept her regimen for her fair and almost blemish-free complexion pretty simple.

After giving birth to son James by husband James Yap, she even decided to shun all forms of beauty treatments requiring the use of anesthesia even if they were not on her face.

"I was quite willing to try almost anything before," she says. "But when I was giving birth to baby James, I experienced all sorts of allergic reactions to anesthesia."

Her doctors strongly advised her not to undergo any procedure requiring anesthesia. So liposuction—and a third pregnancy—are no longer options.

Her terms

Before Aquino signed up as the newest celebrity endorser of Facial Care Centre, she set two conditions: she can only endorse cosmetic procedures that are non-invasive and require no downtime.

The company, with branches all over Metro Manila (Aquino goes to the GT Tower clinic in Makati) and Cebu, was only too willing to oblige.

"I won't be true to myself if I promote something that I myself would not use or undergo," says Aquino, one of the country's highest-paid endorsers. "I really believe in the effectiveness of the products and treatments I endorse."

She is aware of her ability to influence other women, especially those in her age group. With her female fans identifying with her, Aquino knows any product or service she promotes is likely to be a bestseller.

But she is also aware that people have different needs. "What might work for me may not be as effective for some people. I would advise them to find out what's good for their skin before they undergo certain treatments and skincare regimens. It really pays, however, to start taking care of your looks while you're still young," Aquino says.

She emphasizes the need to follow religiously a skincare routine that has already been found to work. In her case, a regimen consisting of Shu Uemura's green cleansing oil, La Mer moisturizer and Repechage Herbal Meltdown Eye Pads (exclusively sold at Facial Care) works wonderfully for her dry skin.

"Repechage is really effective in gently removing stubborn eye makeup, including waterproof mascara," she says. "I also use Facial Care's nighttime moisturizer with my other over-the-counter products."

Gentle approaches

The temptation to undergo more drastic procedures like chemical peels exists, but the downtime involved has given her second thoughts. She would rather stick to more gentle approaches (aka "lunchtime procedures") to skincare.

"Those who've had chemical peels look really great," she says. "But since I work five days a week, I can't afford to look red and flaky on TV. Besides, I try to avoid all sorts of skin-peeling treatments because I have extremely dry skin."

Aquino appears to have found the right skincare treatment in Facial Care. She undergoes regular cleaning (she is prone to blackheads in the so-called "T zone") and has discovered the lifting effects of Refirme, as well as the refreshing and smoothening properties of Facial Care's signature collagen mask.

"I'm generally blessed with good skin," she says. "I don't have any deep lines along the mouth nor do I have furrowed eyebrows. But there's no hiding the fact that when I'm tired my jowls have a tendency to sag."

Refirme, a gentle form of laser treatment that emits radio frequencies deep under the skin to enhance collagen production, did the trick. Aquino has completed so far only two of the first five treatments, but already she swears by its youth-enhancing effects.

"I'm very self-critical," she says, pointing to one of her un-retouched publicity shots for Facial Care. "But I've noticed that after only one session of Refirme, my face has become firmer."

It took between 48-72 hours for Refirme to make a difference. A day after her first session, Aquino was not convinced of the treatment's efficacy. She found her skin a bit dry. Worried, she called Facial Care's resident dermatologist, who told her to be patient.

"I had Refirme on a Tuesday but when we went to Boracay later that week I began to see a difference," she says. "I barely had any makeup, but when I saw my photos my skin had a certain glow that really looked good."

What she loves best about going to Facial Care is the refreshing collagen mask, which caps a session beginning with mildly painful cleaning and almost painless Refirme. It is a virtual beauty dessert that Aquino looks forward to.

"I think the mask effectively removes tiny, stubborn bumps on my skin caused by dryness," she says. "Unlike other masks, which are gooey and dirty, this one isn't. It's light and cool."

Aquino likens the experience to being tortured initially before getting the royal treatment.

AQUINO and manager Boy Abunda with Facial Care officials

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Your Doctor Knows Best

Norbert Lingling D. Uy, MD, FPCP, FPCC

Question:

My friend had a heart attack. He died a day after his admission to the hospital. Why?

Doctor says...

Heart attack is known as myocardial infarction or MI in medical parlance. It is a serious condition that occurs when a blood clot blocks a blood vessel that feeds blood to a part of the heart muscle. The affected heart muscle is injured and dies. It used to be thought of as a condition afflicting elderly persons, but we are now aware that even young individuals do suffer a heart attack. It is a major cause of mortality and morbidity in our country. Many productive lives were shattered by it. It can occur anytime. In some individuals, it strikes suddenly, but in many people warning signs and symptoms occur hours, days or even months before the event. A very important predictor of a heart attack is recurrent chest pain triggered by exertion and relieved by rest. Certain risk factors known to contribute to the development of coronary artery disease such as cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, lack of physical activity, obesity, excessive alcohol drinking and family history of heart attack increase one's risk of a heart attack.

Chest pain is the commonly recognized warning of a heart attack. However, heart attacks can have many variable signs and symptoms including sensation of persistent pressure, fullness or squeezing pain in the center of the chest, chest pain that extends to the shoulder, arm, back, or even to the teeth and jaw, increasing episodes of chest pain, indigestion or prolonged upper abdominal pain, shortness of breath, cold sweating, feeling of impending doom, lightheadedness, fainting and nausea and vomiting. The occurrence of these symptoms in an individual with risk factors for coronary artery disease should prompt a consultation with his doctor.

Years ago, a heart attack was often fatal. Today, we have improved treatments that can increase the survival of patients with heart attack. Early access to these treatments is vital in ensuring a greater chance of survival.

The causes of death during a heart attack and available treatments to prevent these will be discussed in next week's column. Always consult and ask the advice of your doctor immediately if you are experiencing any of the above-mentioned symptoms.

Dr. Uy is an Associate Professor of Medicine at UERM College of Medicine. He is the Chief of the Section of Cardiology, UERM Hospital, Head of the Department of Medicine, Mary Johnston Hospital and a consultant at St. Luke's Medical Center and Philippine Heart Center.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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Give Your Looks an Upgrade

Facial Care Centre FOR MEN offers **5 Ways** to rid your skin of its flaws

1 Acne scars and Blemishes

Sure, chicks dig the Colin-Farell-scruffy look, but acne scars and blemishes *do not* equal ruggedly handsome. Pricking pimples end up in scars and blemishes - which last longer than the actual zits! Before someone calls you Crater Face, try the **Diamond Peel**. It's a highly advanced procedure that'll painlessly remove old dead surface skin. It gets rid of post-acne scars, blemishes and other dark spots.

Diamond Peel

2 Pimple breakouts and Back Acne

You've already been through hell in high school (unless you managed to skip the awkward stage). Acne on your face subtracts *pogi* points, while acne on your back ruins your sex appeal. So leave acne to past pubescent memories. **LightCure Acne Therapy** is an easy, effective way to get rid of the acne-fast. It uses a high intensity blue-violet light to kill acne bacteria. Amazingly, it treats zits on any part of the body 3x faster than other procedures.

3 Fine lines and Wrinkles

Lousy pick-up lines and fine facial lines: neither will get you the girl. And don't go denying your age, because the wrinkles are a giveaway. **Fraxel** is a hi-tech laser treatment that works like computer-generated retouching! (Think PhotoShop for your face.) Fraxel can "airbrush" away wrinkles and fine lines, with no surgery whatsoever. Revealing your age is up to you.

4 Loose, sagging skin

Everything is faster these days. Want to look years younger in less than an hour? **ReFirme** is a skin-tightening treatment with no needles, stitches, scars or sedation involved. After a quick 45-minute session, sags are lifted. Lines are diminished and skin is firmer.

5 Skin Fatigue

Stressed? Who isn't, these days? Relax and get pampered with **Shi-Zen D-Tox.** The combination of Shiatsu massage with a detoxification facial mask will surely send you to a state of nirvana. It improves the texture of your skin and corrects skin fatigue dysfunctions.

Shi-Zen D-Tox

All treatments are available at the FOR MEN Centre. Call 813-7959 for a free consultation.

Ladies team tennis invitational on July 29

A LADIES TEAM TENNIS INvitational tournament will be held starting July 29 at the Philippine Columbian Association (PCA) indoor tennis courts, Plaza Dilao, Paco, Manila.

Participating teams are Eusebio Tennis Club, Olivarez Tennis, BF Resort Las Piñas Tennis, PCA, Metro East Cainta, Whirlpool Quezon City Sports Club, Palms Club and Mandaluyong Tennis Club.

Tournament director and coach DJ Suarez, 1989 bronze and 1993 gold medalist in women's tennis in the Southeast Asian Games, will preside over the event. Boy Leonora of the Philippine Lawn Tennis Association (Philta) will supervise.

The tournament aims to help improve women players' skills and sustain the development of women's tennis in the country, as well as promote fellowship among tennis lovers in general.

Television sports show host Dyan Castillejo, a former tennis champion, will host the opening ceremony. Other prominent women players like Jennifer Saberon, Jennifer Saret and Menchie de la Rosa, who have all competed internationally, are also expected to attend.

The tournament is presented by Bluewater Day Spa, Dunlop, Nike Park, Sarabia Optical, YSA and Rush fitness water.

Other games are scheduled Aug. 2, 4, 7, 9, 11-12.

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

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BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

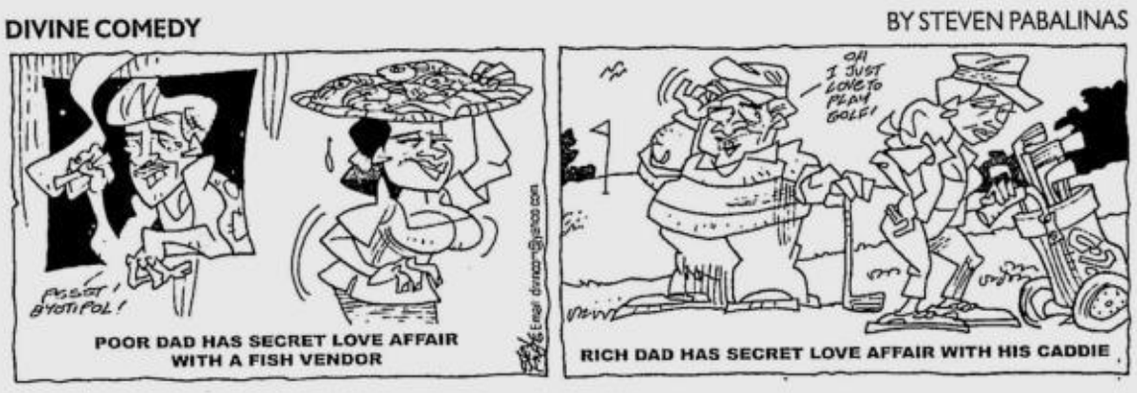
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

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BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

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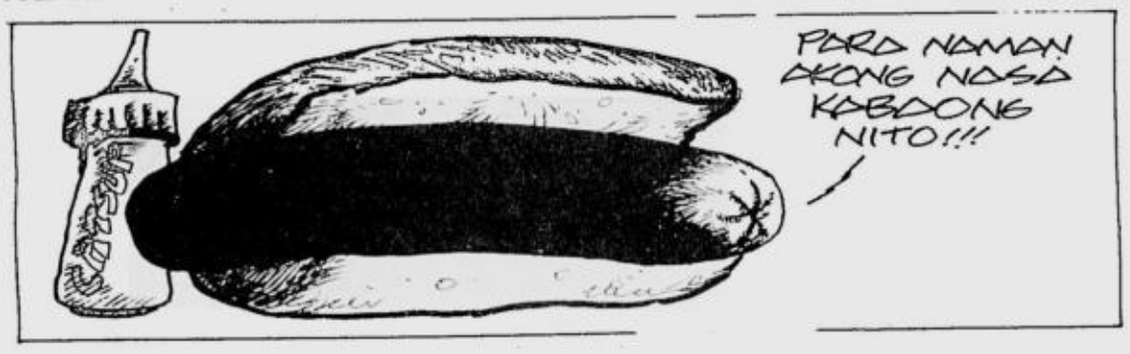


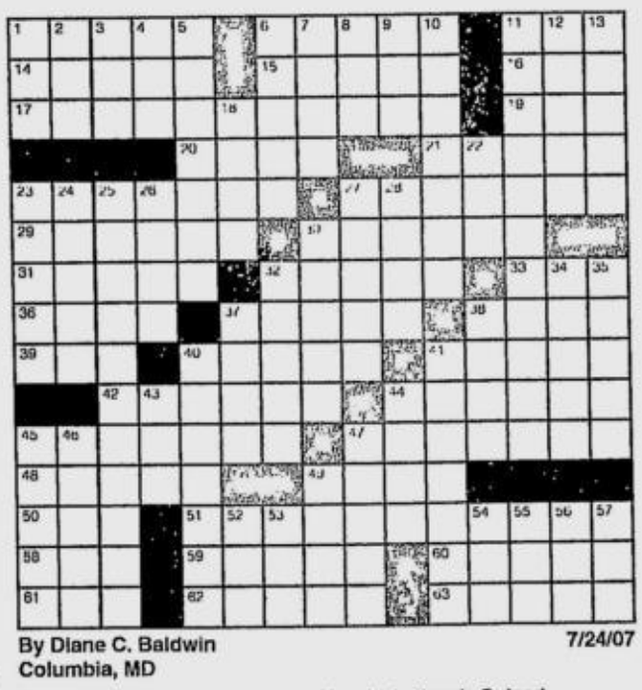
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Given out in portions
6 Italian staple
11 Bit of a pickle
14 Small egg
15 Body of water
16 ETs' craft
17 Happiness flashpoint
19 Hoot
20 Ruffle feathers
21 Negatively charged atom
23 Puts back together
27 Teaching staff
29 Lucky charm
30 Royalty fur
31 Consumer activist Ralph
32 Remove air from pipes
33 Anticipatory time
36 Musicians' bookings
37 Peace birds
38 Some whiskeys
39 Shade provider
40 Used to the limit
41 Strays off course
42 Tickles pink
44 Reporter's pay scale
45 Place to drink Chablis
47 Spanish misters
48 Roman port
49 Burn balm
50 Ancient
51 Glorious occasion
58 Pastoral spot
59 Billiards shot
60 Heart line
61 Hog housing
62 Auguries
63 Sieved into pellets

DOWN
1 Dad's love
2 Gabor sister
3 Harbor craft
4 Yalie
5 Protesting sort
6 Kitties
7 Topmost spot
8 Get the picture
9 Earth tone
10 Heartburn soother
11 Special celebration period
12 In the offing
13 Woolgathering
18 Coin factory
22 Church sister
23 Chain of mountains
24 Internet service
25 Reckoning juncture
26 South-of-the-border cheers
27 Emancipated
28 Singing brothers surname
30 North Pole denizens
32 Square-jawed dog
34 Brink
35 Slalom trails
37 File fillers
38 Nevada city
40 Hot sauce
41 Catsup ingredient
43 Aloha gift
44 Writer Uris
45 Tartan fabrics
46 Ocean speck
47 Whitman and Pickens
49 Soon
52 Emoter
53 High dudgeon
54 __ polloi
55 Tolkien baddie
56 Shoshone
57 Far out!



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD
7/24/07

Monday's Puzzle Solved

R	I	O	T		S	L	I	T	S		A	P	S	E
I	N	C	A		H	E	N	I	E		U	R	I	S
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7/24/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're bold and daring, partly because you seek excitement! You actually attract adventure to you. You're aware of your image in the eyes of others, and because of this, you know how to attract attention. You live life with style and flair (and you know what you're doing)! This year you will build or construct something important to you. **Birthdate of:** Jennifer Lopez, singer/actress; Kristin Chenoweth, singer/actress; Lynda Carter, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be unsure of how you're earning money or how you're spending it right now. Certain financial plans feel blocked today. Don't worry: this is temporary.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel indecisive about many things today. In fact, you're almost paralyzed. This is just a temporary thing. (Observe what it forces you to look at.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today is a confusing day for many. You're not sure which way to go or even what you should really believe in. Travel plans are uncertain or blocked.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's hard to determine what a friend or group expects from you. Perhaps others are not sure where you stand. You can't get your way today. (Rats!)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your ambitions are weakened by the wishes of partners or friends. Others don't understand what you're trying to achieve. It's best to bide your time for the moment.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Confusion exists in matters related to publishing, the media, travel, dealing with foreign countries or even politics or religion. If you're confused, don't act!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a poor day for decisions about inheritances, how to divide shared property, insurance matters and dealing with the wealth or obligations to others. You won't defend your best interests.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): There's no pleasing others today. They don't understand where you're coming from, and vice versa. That's why you might be disappointed in someone. (Don't let this get to you.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): It's hard to accomplish what you want to do at work today. The expectations of others make you second-guess yourself. (Hey, that's OK—you're not a mind reader!)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might feel disappointed in romantic matters or anything related to children, sports, show business or the hospitality industry. Wait a day or two before you make important decisions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't force issues at home or within your family today. Some sort of confusion will weaken your ability to arrive at the best course of action.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're daydreaming today. But also you might feel confused or even deceived by someone. This is a poor day to make important decisions or enter into negotiations or contracts with others.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

3					7			6
	8				6		9	
		4		5		8		
5	1			6				
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	9		1				2	
7			3					4

Difficulty Level ★★ 7/24

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	5	4	3	7	6	2	8	1
7	3	2	8	1	4	5	6	9
1	6	8	2	5	9	4	7	3
6	1	7	9	3	5	8	4	2
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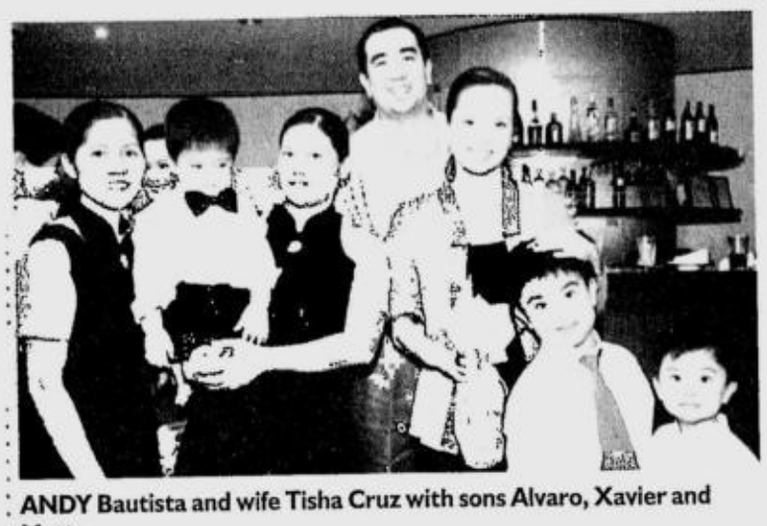
Difficulty Level ★ 7/23

DULCE Romualdez and Ditas Jalbuena

LITA Bautista with son Gabino; Martin and wife Sylvia Bautista

Beautiful Baby's birthday bash

OUR Queen for a Day, Baby Cruz, with her adorable grandsons Xavier, Matteo and Alvaro Bautista



ANDY Bautista and wife Tisha Cruz with sons Alvaro, Xavier and Matteo

YAYING Dragon and Tina Laurel

INA Dizon and Violet de Borja

SINGAPORE-BASED Marjo Chan

BELA M. V. with parents Dr. Daniel Vazquez and Ising Madrigal V.

BOEY Cruz and Josie Sy

RAMON Sy and daughter, architect Anna and husband, banker Steve Lawrence

MYRZA Sison, Andrej Wisniewski, Victoria Angove, and Raeanna Cranbourne

CACAY Moras, Hazel Huelves, and Nicole Bulatao

THAT WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE, STYLE and class, beautiful **Baby Cruz** of Jewelmer and Franck Provost fame celebrated her birthday at the *tres prive* Hexagon Lounge, the exclusive club at the Yuchengco Tower, with an intimate dinner for *famille* and close pals, dahlings.

Baby's daughter, gorgeous **Tisha**, with husband, Shangri-La Plaza hot shot **Andy Bautista**; and sons **Boey** with **Carla Enage**, and **Alex**, planned a special night.

Pals from way back, **Helen Yuchengco Dee** and the gang—statuesque **Rica Garcia**, **Ruby Meyer** and man for all seasons **Cesar Gabaldon**—asked **Carmen Pateña** to perform, dahlings.

Close-close pals Dr. **Daniel Vazquez** and his wife **Ising Madrigal**; Madame **Imelda R. Marcos**, **Rosie Osmeña Valencia**, and **Baby Gana** were fashionably on time, *palanggas*, followed by the mahjong gang of adorable **Ditas Jalbuena**, **Chot Reyes**, **Dulce Romualdez** and **Letty Santos**. Fashion plate **Marjo Chan** flew in from Singapore for Baby's day.

Mega banker **Ramon Sy** and wife **Josie** were the celebrator's first friends after she married and moved to Hong Kong.

Dinner consisted of Caesar Salad, a choice of Angus Roast Beef with roasted garlic mashed potatoes or Pan-seared Cream Dory with lemon butter cream sauce and rice pilaf. Capping it was a to-die-for strawberry shortcake superbly prepared by chef **John Quimson**.

A short video of photos from the past, a sing-along with Carmen P. and dancing followed. Baby's three grandsons, **Xavier**, 6; **Matteo**, 4; and **Alvaro**, 2½, got a standing ovation for their rendition of Il Divo classics, *palanggas*.

Finally, the queen for the day, adorable Baby Cruz, was toasted with the bubbly.

Cheers, *palangga*.

Nine Vines

Women have really come a long way, *palanggas*. Today, women like to end a long day by chatting and chilling with friends as they sip wine.

Naturellement, these women deserve only the best. With this in mind, every gal's favorite Marie Claire Magazine, *natch*, joined Wine Depot in launching Nine Vines in Manille.

Held at the so pleasant M. Café, Greenbelt 4, invitees were introduced to the Angoves Nine Vines Rosé and Angove Nine Vines White, two delicious, light, sweet wines. Served chilled, they are perfect on a warm city night, dahlings.

The Angoves Nine Vines Rosé received a gold medal and trophy for Best Rosé Wine in the 2006 National Wine Show in Canberra, Australia's most hotly contested wine show.

Victoria Angove of Australia's Angove winemaking *famille*, jetted in from Down Under to introduce the award-winning Nine Vines brand.

We nibbled on finger food that went perfectly with Nine Vines wines, compliments of Wine Depot and M Café, *palanggas*.

Hey, gals, check out your Marie Claire mag with the adorable **Judy Ann Santos** on the cover. Even *moi* dug it, *palanggas*.

Krispy Kreme

Can you believe our town still can't get enough of Krispy Kreme?

HELEN Yuchengco Dee, with Ruby Gonzales Meyer, Baby Cruz, and Rica Gonzales

ROSIE Osmeña Valencia, with Letty Santos and Linda Yap

ACTRESS Isabel Oli is flanked by Jim Fuentebella and wife Mavis Manotoc-Fuentebella.

MODELS Bubbles Paraiso and Phoemela Baranda

For the past six months, crowds have been flocking to Krispy Kreme outlets—the flagship at Bonifacio High Street, the second branch at SM Megamall, and now in Greenhills that features the first drive-through in Asia for this world-famous Original Glazed doughnuts, *palanggas*.

It's the family behind Max's Fried Chicken that clinched the franchise of America's most loved doughnut. From the looks of it, with 30 stores set to open in the next five years, the Philippines will be another Krispy Kreme country, dahlings.

Jim T. Fuentebella, chair of the Real American Doughnut Co. Inc., Philippine franchisee of Krispy Kreme, and wife, tall eye-catcher **Mavis Manotoc**; **Jeff Welch**, Krispy Kreme Int'l senior vice president for development; **Jim Rogers**, Krispy Kreme Int'l marketing director; and **Chris Joseph**, Krispy Kreme division director Asia-Pacific, welcomed the VIP's with the rest of the Max gang like **Loreen Trota**, husband **Bill Walsh** and children **Robert** and **Rica**, **Jimmy Trota**, **Carolyn** and **Jog Salud**, **Cristina** and **Buddy Garcia**; and **Sharon Fuentebella**, natch!

All roads led to Greenhills that night. Guests included Rep. **Miles Roces**, Mayor **Toby Tiangco**, entrepreneur **Wilson Lim**, Greenhills Shopping Center GM **Joey Santos**, Ortigas and company COO **Rex Drilon II**, restaurateur **Shin Karami** (of Arya Persian Restaurant), and model **Cathy Santamaria-Escaño** with her son **Ignacio**, *palanggas*.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

Award winners

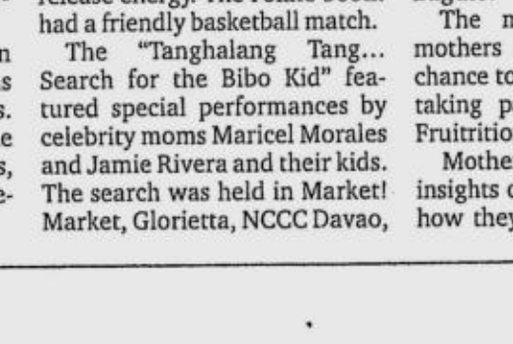
Ten fantastic Filipino architectural firms received the *tres* prestigious Hunter Douglas Architectural Design Excellence Awards in the Building and Construction Interchange (BCI) Asia Top 10 Award 2007 at Hotel Intercontinental Makati ballroom, *palanggas*.

Moi was told that, "for the first time in BCI Award's three-year history, **Hunter Douglas**, a leading international architectural and window fashion manufacturer, granted the recognition to local architectural firms who have designed and built remarkable landmark pieces using Luxalon Architectural Products.

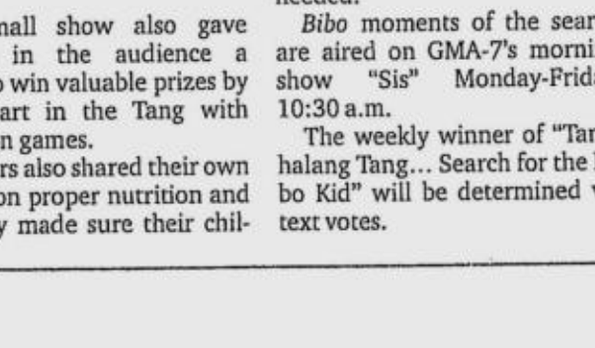
"Hunter Douglas earnestly believes that as a steadfast partner of local architects, designers and contractors, we should recognize our loyal clients who provide continuous support to our architectural products' brand Luxalon," said young woman of substance **Gigi Anne Lapira**, president and general manager of Hunter Douglas Philippines, dahlings.

Among the 10 hotshot awardees were DQA Design Planning, Jose Siao Ling & Associates, Leandro V. Locsin Partners, OJ Architects & Associates, Palafox Associates, Philip Recto & Associates, Pimentel Rodriguez Simbulan & Partners, R. Villarosa Architects, Steven Leach Jr. and Associates, and Syndicated Arch. **Jun Palafox** of Palafox Associates, a BCI Asia Top 10 award winner and a strong proponent of green architecture, who ranks 94th overall in the World Architecture Top 200, said: "Thankfully, Hunter Douglas has building materials for green architecture and environmental designs which our firm uses."

More info? Call 4533155, 0917-8239241 and 0922-8089275; or e-mail luxaflex@hunterdouglas.com.ph nd luxalon@hunterdouglas.com.ph.



ANNA Constantino, Kay Yu, Malou Liu, and Michelle Pantoja



JOSE Siao Ling, Robert Sac, Gigi Anne Lapira, and Ana Siao Ling

JOSHUA Bije, Roger Villarosa, and Lenny Canizo

Nationwide search for bibo kid ongoing

THE NEW TANG WITH FRUITRITION has launched the very first "Tanghalang Tang... Search for the Bibo Kid."

Launched in Metro Manila, the nationwide search has been brought to Baguio City, Pangasinan, Quezon and Davao.

This month, the search goes to Limketkai Mall in Cagayan de Oro City, Ayala Center Cebu and SM Marilao in Bulacan.

"Tanghalang Tang... Search for the Bibo Kid" is looking for the happiest, healthiest and, more importantly, the one-of-a-kind *bibong-bibo* kid.

A *bibo* kid will be chosen each week and he/she and the home partner will each win P5,000. For the grand finals, the winner and the home partner will each receive P30,000.

The search celebrates the new Tang with Fruitrition, enriched with select fruit juice Vitamins B and C and Folate plus Vitamin A and iron.

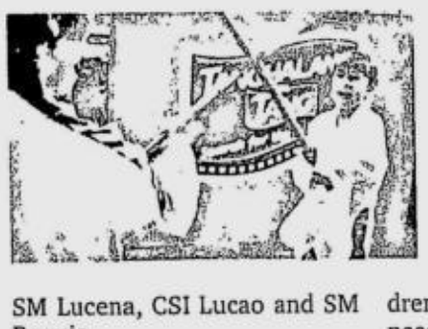
A total of 186 participants registered in Glorietta Makati, 158 in NCCC Davao, 169 in SM Lucena and 280 in Market! Market!, Taguig City.

Several activities were held in different Tang Fruitrition booths representing different nutrients. The activities challenged the children in the arts, sports, singing, dancing and self-defense.

In the Vitamin A booth, kids sang popular nursery rhymes while the Vitamin C booth had a self-defense demo that taught kids about healthy immune system.

The Iron booth showcased the next dancing princes and princesses in the dance mat challenge while the mini-gym booth focused on how B vitamins help release energy. The Folate booth had a friendly basketball match.

The "Tanghalang Tang... Search for the Bibo Kid" featured special performances by celebrity moms Maricel Morales and Jamie Rivera and their kids. The search was held in Market! Market, Glorietta, NCCC Davao, SM Lucena, CSI Lucao and SM Baguio.



TANG Bibo kids are taught basic self-defense for a more active lifestyle.

The mall show also gave mothers in the audience a chance to win valuable prizes by taking part in the Tang with Fruitrition games.

Mothers also shared their own insights on proper nutrition and how they made sure their children got all the vitamins they needed.

Bibo moments of the search are aired on GMA-7's morning show "Sis" Monday-Friday, 10:30 a.m.

The weekly winner of "Tanghalang Tang... Search for the Bibo Kid" will be determined via text votes.

THE PROMO will look for the happiest, healthiest and *bibong-bibo* kid.

ILLUSTRATION BY LA MISTADES

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Follow the feeling

"Surrender means letting go." –Deepak Chopra, MD

IMAGINE A ROLLER COASTER. WHO enjoys the ride the most? Those who clutch the railing tightly with fearful eyes or those who throw their arms up in the air with exhilaration on their faces?

Like clockwork

All human beings have an innate sense of the world. But more importantly, a sense of themselves. And yet somehow, in our "busy-ness," this is forgotten.

Day in and day out, life churns out its routine. Waking up in the morning, rushing through breakfast, reporting for work or fulfilling our duties as members of the rat race, wining and dining, returning home, relating with family, finding time for community service and God—all this makes up the full spectrum of what we do.

And, in this regular regimen that we call a life, romance is lost. The clock continues to click and, in the midst of living we do by rote, the magic is gone.

Reviving magic

It is said that the unknown, the wild and exciting are the territories of lovers. And rightly so for the sense of expectancy and the expectation of exhilaration are present.

What if we could look at the world like lovers once again? Would our lives be any different? Or would it turn out differently only in ways defined by our fantasies?

Romance is likened to a bud. It expects to unfold like a mystery waiting to be unraveled. Rule No. 1 then is paramount—maintain the mystery. And rule No. 2? Surrender.

Give in

The word surrender is not always associated with defeat. In another context it means to give in to what is deeply desired. Not necessarily to a person but to a feeling.

Most of our moments are focused on real needs based on bills, deadlines, schedules, etc. How about the real needs of the spirit? The heart? Don't they manifest themselves in the form of dreams, fantasies, whisperings of the soul?

Explain why at your busiest time, you find yourself distracted, hearing all the noises around you, yet drowned by the voices inside of you saying one thing and one thing alone—escape.

Short list

Write down at this moment, all the adjectives that best describe you. Then, write down beside it what action you did to deserve it. Example:

Adventurous - went white water rafting
Kind - donated to a Rotary street children project
Loving - hug my loved one each day

Now, write down the qualities you have that need addressing or that have not expressed themselves then the action that will fulfill them.

Passionate - three romantic nights in Boracay
Funny - told jokes in a party
Courageous - tamed a lion
Musical - sang in a concert

Magic is often found in the things we ought to do to complete ourselves. By rising above the ordinary, your uniqueness surfaces.

Listen to your urges

Supposing you could live this day as far away from your normal daily routine as possible. You would:

- Not report for work but catch up on lost sleep.
- Go vegetarian for lunch instead of ordering your favorite steak or meat dish.
- Dance the night away instead of being glued to your computer.
- Read poetry to your beloved or to yourself.
- Visit Tibet or Egypt.
- Shake hands with a stranger.
- Smile at everyone you meet.
- Turn left and not right, hop and not walk, sing and not talk, praise and not grumble.

All about love

Your instincts are anchored in your heart. Between the brain and the heart, the wiser of the two is the organ that beats each day, pumping your very lifeblood.

When your heart says go, and the mind says no—go.

Love is not controlling the flow of life—for this is impossible. If you flow with the current of your feeling, you are being true to your being.

So, do not struggle over the what ifs. When you put your feelings over results, that is when real life begins. So, in celebration of life to mark the rainy season, why not dance in the rain with the one you love?

Love and light!

Reference: "The Path to Love" by Deepak Chopra, MD

"Celebrate Life with Cory Quirino, SM," a session on wellness and beauty, July 28, 1 p.m., at SM Bicutan. Open to the public, free admission.

For inquiries, please call 3718197 or 6206834.

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Elementals force a company to relocate

A SUBSIDIARY OF A LARGE diversified company was engaged in agri-business. Following a reorganization in the mother company, the subsidiary relocated the entire operation and rented a big one-story house on a corner lot in Makati that was formerly rented by a foreign consulate. The property had a large backyard.

One early morning, the company president went to the empty boardroom to get something. The chairs were stacked upside down on the conference table. As he approached the table, a chair suddenly rose up and hurled itself to the wall at the back of the room. The president rushed out of the room and went straight to the office of the human resources vice president, my former boss in the firm's holding company.

The HR officer told the president things had been happening since they moved to the place two years before. A Spanish-looking couple was seen walking around the offices, office machines would start running when nobody was around, lights would turn on and off, etc.

"Why didn't anybody tell me these things," the president demanded.

"Well," said the HR executive, "we didn't think you would believe us."

The president asked the HR executive to call me right away.

That's how I got involved. I brought along a well-known clairvoyant. He confirmed the presence of several discarnate and other earthbound spirits. His description of the foreign couple matched reports of some employees.

But that was not the most disturbing thing we discovered. The clairvoyant said the backyard was an entrance to the elemental kingdom. There was no way the elementals would leave. That's why they were causing trouble.

Since the company moved to that place, business went bad. Management did not suspect any supernatural causes because the country's economy was also not doing well then.

But there were also other problems, like many employees getting sick or being involved in accidents. Relations among employees was strained and a labor dispute arose.

We recommended the company's transfer because the elementals were angry and would do everything to make their lives miserable. The comptroller objected because the company still had several months in their lease contract and it was a very expensive property. I told them it was entirely up to them.

The next day, the comptroller called and said, "You know, Jimmy, I was at the Ateneo for four years and the Jesuits could not convince me of such supernatural nonsense. You were here for only 30 minutes and you've convinced me that we have to go."

After the company transferred, I was told sales went up, relations between labor and management improved, and employees were happier and less tense.

Deaths in American firm

A large American food manufacturing company south of Manila consulted me because of a series of employee deaths in its marketing department.

Unknown to management, many strange paranormal things had been happening there for many years. The personnel manager was the first to suspect that the deaths could have a supernatural cause.

When I went to this huge factory, I brought a clairvoyant and a Chinese *feng shui* expert. We all felt the presence of many highly negative and angry spirits, both human and elemental.

The deaths were attributed to a disgruntled former employee dismissed by the company years ago and who had since died. He wanted to punish the company by killing marketing personnel whom he blamed for his dismissal.

He was helped by a horde of highly negative *engkantos*.

When we toured the company premises, there were warehouses I could not enter because of their highly negative energy. Only the *feng shui* expert and the clairvoyant entered the sites while I stayed in the office of the personnel manager and explained to company executives the situation.

I noticed an old *duhat* tree filled with fruits and with branches so low the fruits almost touched the ground. I had never seen a *duhat* with so many fruits.

I also noticed a bulldozer facing the tree. I was told the bulldozer had been there several days. When they tried to bulldoze the tree to give way to the expansion of the building beside it, the bulldozer suddenly broke down. Several mechanics tried to repair the machine but failed.

We told management that the tree was inhabited by many elementals and they did not want the tree destroyed. Something bad would happen to people who would try to cut it down.

We asked the company to get the bulldozer away from the tree. When this was done, they were able to restart the bulldozer. The company decided to spare the tree.

Fortunately they listened to advise. No more deaths occurred after our visit.

THE SAGE Twist (Marichyasana) aims to relieve lower back tension.

THE TREE Pose (Vrksasana) helps strengthen thighs, calves, ankles and back, as well as improve balance.

Look good as you shape up

YOGA INSTRUCTOR ANNA UNSON-Price uses shopping to motivate her students at her studio in Olympia.

Price says she tells her class that, instead of bingeing on food after a workout, they should buy a new outfit and be rewarded by the sight of what yoga has done to their bodies.

The right outfit will also make sure they continue to enjoy their workout and get the most benefit from it.

Yoga is a fast and effective way to lose weight and reshape the body. As a workout, it improves the cardiovascular system, resistance, flexibility and the mind.

Though yoga does not require any kind of equipment, it is important to wear the right kind of clothes.

Sassa Activewear's fashionable line of workout clothes guarantees that you'll look as good as you feel when you do your yoga routines.

A pair of straight cut yoga pants will flatter women of all shapes and sizes, giving a streamlined look from hip to ankle. Made of stretch material, it allows a wide range of motion.

The standard tank top made from breathable fibers can go with the pants or, if you want more coverage, a spaghetti strap camisole with built in pads.

While style should be considered, function should come first. Loose-fitting tops are not appropriate because they can ride up during some of the moves. Women who are heavy on top may want workout bras with such features as adjustable straps for custom fit. Most yoga instructors want students' clothes to show their knees to make sure they are doing the poses properly.

Price says you need more than one pair of workout clothes for a week of workout. She suggests investment pieces like stretch pants and tank top.

Sassa Activewear are reasonably priced allowing you to invest in more than one set of yoga outfit.

It also lets you have more variety in your workout clothes as items come in prints, colors and with embellishments.

Sassa Activewear is available in Robinsons Department Stores, all SM Hypermart branches and The Landmark.

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What is Diabetes and what are its risks factors?

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a disease in which the body does not produce enough insulin, or is unable to efficiently use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone released by the pancreas that regulates our blood sugar level. Uncontrolled diabetes eventually leads to high blood sugar (hyperglycemia). Patients with diabetes experience a marked increase in excretion of urine, excessive thirst, constant hunger, weight loss, blurring of vision and fatigue. DM is classified into four types: Type 1 diabetes results from a lack of insulin production due to damaged insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, Type 2 diabetes is caused by the inability of the body to use insulin effectively and it accounts for 90% of DM cases worldwide. Gestational diabetes is hyperglycemia during pregnancy. Other types include drug-or chemical-induced diabetes, or those that are related to genetic syndromes and diseases of the pancreas. Some risk factors of diabetes are family history, obesity, physical inactivity, ethnicity or race, hypertension, elevated triglyceride level, low HDL cholesterol, polycystic ovary syndrome, and a history of blood vessel diseases. Many individuals may have no symptoms or are unaware that they have the disorder, hence, it is very important to consult a doctor to know more about diabetes.

Endocrinologist Dr. Ma. Cecille Añonuevo-Cruz answers this week's feature question on Diabetes. Dra. Chi, a Medicine graduate of U.P., specializes in Internal Medicine. She also holds subspecialty in Endrocinology and Metabolism. She is a fellow of the Philippine College of Physicians and a diplomate of the Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism. She spends her free time looking and trying new recipes, reading and watching movies with her husband Dr. Allen Joel Cruz. MEDICard members may avail of her consultation services at N.L. Villa Memorial Medical Center during Mondays and Fridays from 2pm to 4pm and at San Antonio General Hospital during Monday, Fridays and Saturdays from 9am to 12noon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montaya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@mydicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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Toni Gonzaga has found her man

By Marinel R. Cruz

TONI GONZAGA IS so in love that she's having a hard time hiding it.

The lucky guy is commercial director Paul Soriano, who was at the helm of Toni's "Catch Me I'm Fallin" music video.

TAKE FIVE

Paul, 25, is the son of noted director Jeric Soriano and the grandson of the late matinee idol Nestor de Villa.

Several actors, including Sam Milby, Luis Manzano, Vhong Navarro and Zanjoe Marudo, have been linked to her, but it looks like Toni has finally found her man.

How was your first meeting? What's your impression of him?

I first met him in one of the shows of Gary Valenciano at the Music Museum. *Sabi ko, 'Ang gwapo naman nito.'* I didn't expect to find Gary V's director to be really young. When we were introduced, I found him to be so humble and simple.

Was that what you liked about him, his being a simple guy?

Not only that. He's very down-to-earth. We also belong to the same church. When you speak with him, you'll know that he's raised well. He's respectful and polite.

Is your relationship on a higher level now?

I can't say that it's on a higher level. But what's good about it is that we're good friends. I prefer falling in love with a friend than with someone who courted me. Guys tend to always put their best foot forward.

Where do you go on date?

He visits me at ABS-CBN or we go to the mall.

What sets him apart from the other guys you got involved with?

I guess it's that fact that he's not an actor. It's so hard to fall in love with an actor because oftentimes, you don't know when the acting starts or stops. At least with a director, he can direct you to the right direction (laughs).

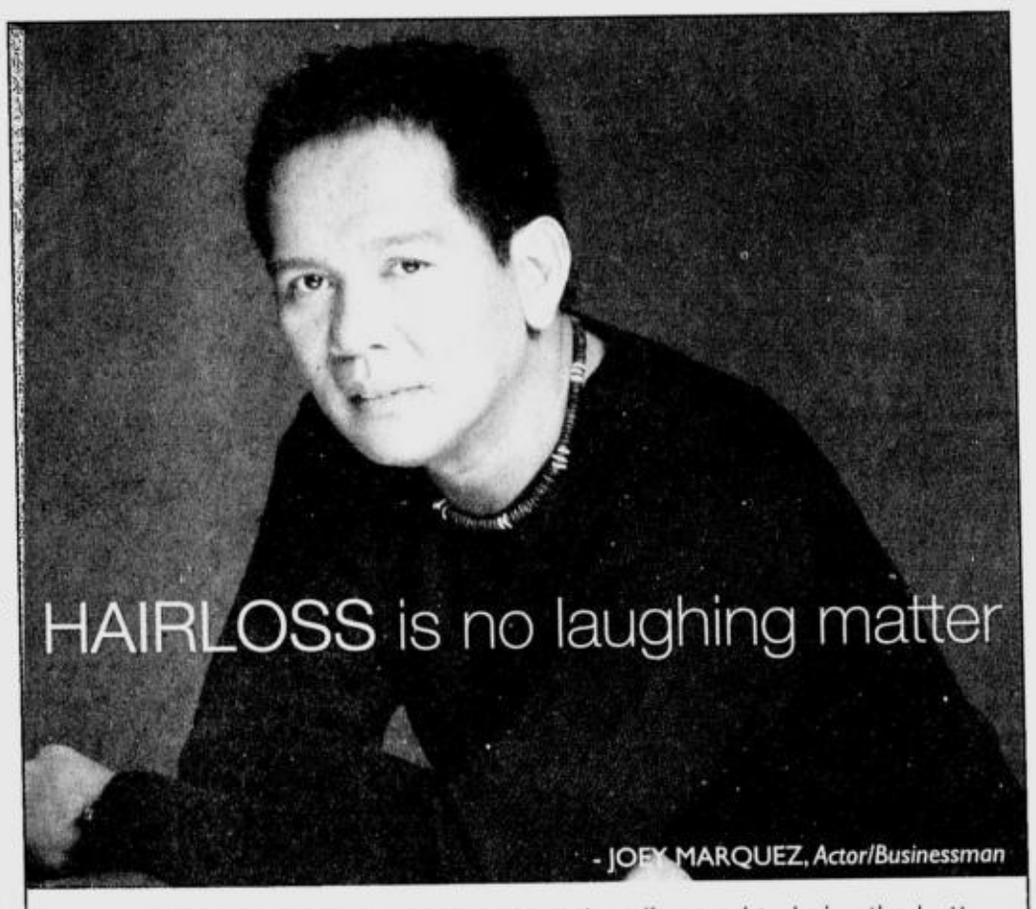
Seriously, I have nothing against actors. You don't plan when to fall in love. It just happens to you. Back when I just transferred to ABS-CBN, I wanted to show to the people who trusted me that I deserve every peso they're paying me.

He could be your first boyfriend.

Yes. I've had partners before, but nothing serious. *Ayaw ko na ng* MU (mutual understanding). I realized *palaging lugi ang babae*. This year, I'm allowing myself to fall in love. Back then, when I find myself liking someone, I always hold back.

Has your heart ever been bro-

TONI/ D3



"I've been a comedian for a long time, I'm used to being the butt of jokes. But I can still be touchy about my appearance. When I started experiencing hairloss, people made jokes about it. I was even called Monsignor because my bald spot was increasing to the size of a Monsignor's cap! I tried to not let it bother me but the truth was, it did. *Siyempre* with less hair you look older. And I'd rather be seen as classic, not old. I tried special shampoos and topical injections *sa* States but with no success. Then I went to Svenson. After three weeks I saw a big difference. Now, when people ask me, 'Is it a wig? A transplant?' I say, 'No, it's my real natural hair! It's Svenson.'"

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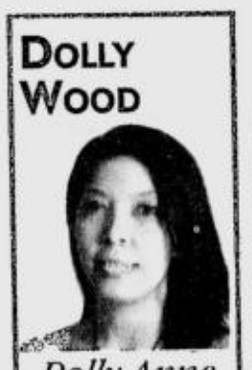
DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Anne Carvajal

Dolly Anne is currently on vacation. Her column Dollywood will resume next week.

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2 HARRY POTTER 2:10, 5:05, 8:00, 10:55 G
3 HARRY POTTER 1:10, 4:05, 7:00, 9:55 G
4 TRANSFORMERS 1:50, 8:00 G | DIE HARD 4:50, 10:50 PG-13

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HARRY POTTER 5
11:50 / 1:10 / 2:00 / 2:40 / 4:00
4:50 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 8:20 / 10:30
VACANCY 12:15 / 2:10 / 4:05 / 6:00 / 7:55 / 9:50
WHITE NOISE 2 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
PLATINUM CINEMA
PLANET TERROR 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
TRANSFORMERS 1:00 / 4:00 / 7:00 / 10:00
DIE HARD 4 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50
HARRY POTTER 5 12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00

MALL 5
1 VACANCY 1:10 / 3:05 / 5:00 / 6:55 / 8:50
2 WHITE NOISE 2 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
3 HARRY POTTER 5 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
4 PLANET TERROR 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15
5 TRANSFORMERS 11:50 / 2:40 / 5:30 / 8:20
DOLBY DIGITAL THX SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM
www.aranetacoliseum.com

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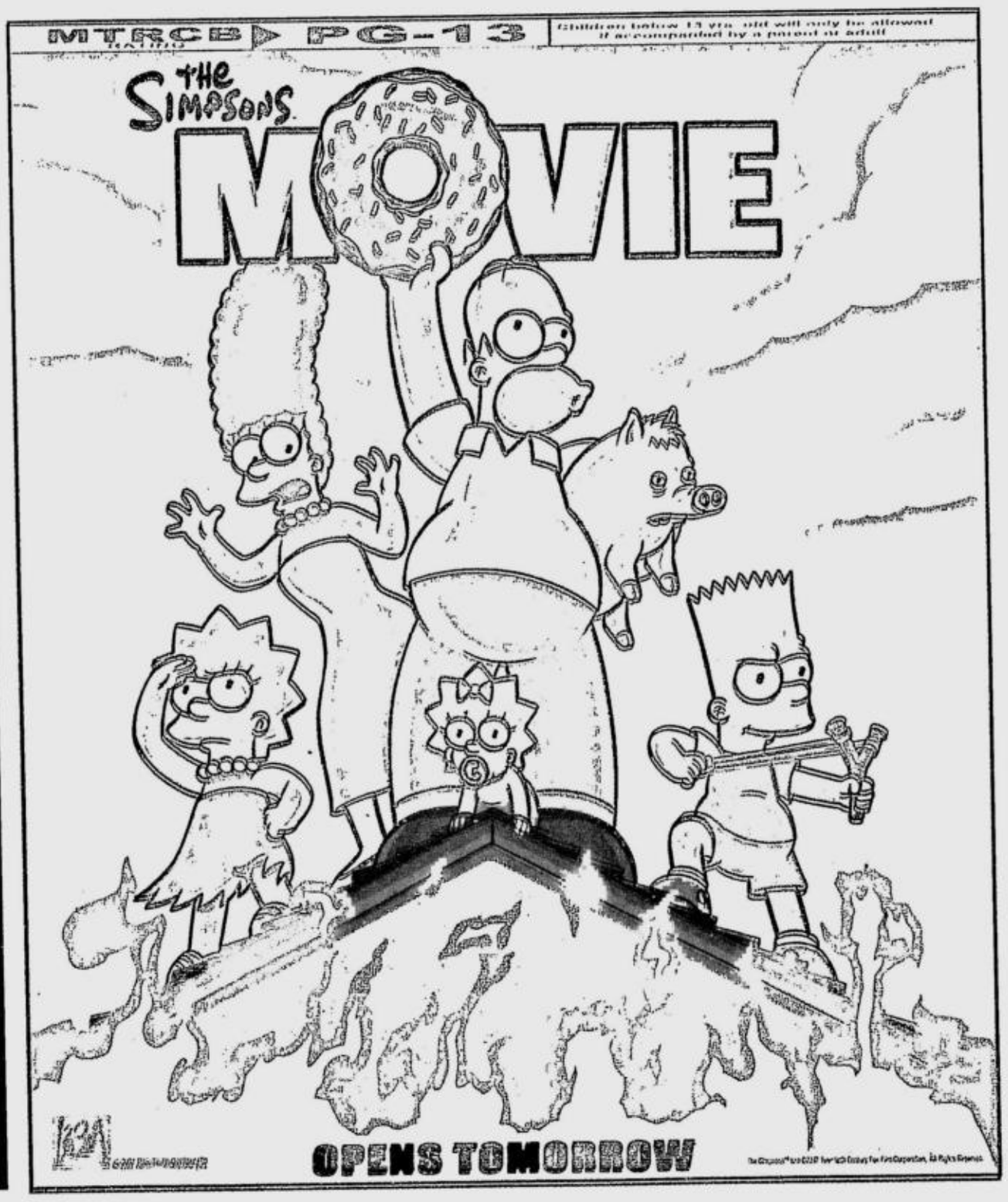
LIVE! AUGUST 19 SUN / 7PM • BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!

MTRCB RATING PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

Greenhills Cineplex
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 VACANCY
4 TRANSFORMERS / DIE HARD
PREMIERE
HARRY POTTER - 5

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 VACANCY
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4.0

Starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 HARRY POTTER - 5
4 VACANCY
5 RESERVED

Metropolis Star Cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 DIE HARD 4.0
3 HARRY POTTER - 5
4 VACANCY

Theatres
Pit Ruins Mall Cabanatuan
Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 NEXT

Pacific Mall Lucena Cinemagic
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel. (042) 660-6271
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 FIREHOUSE DOG / DIE HARD 4.0
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Filinvest Festival Cinema
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 PLANET TERROR
2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 HARRY POTTER - 5
4 HARRY POTTER - 5
5 TRANSFORMERS
6 FANTASTIC FOUR
7 DIE HARD 4.0
8 TIYANAKS
9 VACANCY
10 WHITE NOISE - 2

Blue Wave Marikina
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 VACANCY
4 DIE HARD 4.0

Super Cinerama
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 VACANCY
4 PLANET TERROR
5 WHITE NOISE - 2

Marketplace
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 DIE HARD - 5
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 RESERVED

Masagana Cinema
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 VACANCY
2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 DIE HARD 4.0

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 VACANCY
2 HARRY POTTER - 5

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 VACANCY
3 NEXT
4 TRANSFORMERS

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 ZOMBIES

Eastwood Cinemas
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 VACANCY
2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 HARRY POTTER - 5
4 DIE HARD 4.0 / TRANSFORMERS

Cinema 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 VACANCY
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 HARRY POTTER - 5
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SHREK THE THIRD
2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 TRANSFORMERS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 PARAISO
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 HARRY POTTER - 5

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Planidel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 VACANCY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 TIYANAKS
2 HARRY POTTER - 5

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 BUG
2 TRANSFORMERS

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 KAMANDAG NG ROSAS
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 BUG

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 VACANCY
2 SHOOTER
3 HARRY POTTER - 5
4 CRISANTA
5 PNA'S LABYRINTH

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 NEXT
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 CONDEMNED
4 HARRY POTTER - 5

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 U BELT
2 MASARAP NA PUGAD

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

MOVIEWORLD

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA

1 HARRY POTTER 5 • THX
1:30 4:10 6:50 9:30LMF

2 HARRY POTTER 5
11:20MF 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00LMF

3 DIE HARD 4
12:00MF 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00LMF

4 TRANSFORMERS
11:00MF 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

5 VACANCY
11:25MF 1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50LMF

6 PLANET TERROR
12:30MF 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50LMF

7 WHITE NOISE 2
1:20MF 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00LMF

8 indieSine: MORENO
12:20MF 2:10 4:00 5:50 7:40 9:30

9 HARRY POTTER 5
1:00MF 3:40 6:20 9:00LMF

10 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
1:10MF 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50LMF

NOW SHOWING!

CRISALDO PABLO'S
MORENO

Kayong dalawa na...
Bubuksan pa ba sa iba?

Don't miss this PROVOCATIVE film about BISEXUALS who fall in love! From Cris Pablo, director of Queer FilmS like DUDA, BATHHOUSE and METLOGS!

Exclusive @ IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria!

ERMITA
Ticket Price: P110 / P120

1 HARRY POTTER 5
11:00MF 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00LMF

2 PLANET TERROR
12:50MF 3:05 5:20 7:35 10:00LMF

3 WHITE NOISE 2
12:20MF 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

4 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
12:20MF 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:15 10:00

5 VACANCY
12:20MF 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

6 DIE HARD 4
11:00MF 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

7 TRANSFORMERS
11:00MF 1:35 4:10 6:50 10:00

METRO EAST
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (02) 882-8100 (02) 882-8108

1 TRANSFORMERS
12:00MF 3:05 6:10 9:10LMF

2 HARRY POTTER 5
4:00 6:40LMF

3 HARRY POTTER 5
1:20 4:00 6:40 9:20LMF

4 DIE HARD 4
12:10MF 3:10 6:10 9:10LMF

5 PLANET TERROR
1:40MF 4:10 6:40 9:10LMF

6 WHITE NOISE 2
11:30MF 1:55 4:20 6:45 9:10LMF

7 HARRY POTTER 5
11:30MF 2:30 5:30 8:30LMF

8 VACANCY
12:30MF 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price: P80 / P100 (02) 936-3221 / 936-3220 loc. 30

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 WHITE NOISE 2
5 VACANCY
6 DIE HARD 4

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P100 / P120 (02) 687-5376

1 HARRY POTTER 5
12:20MF 3:00 5:40 8:20LMF

2 PLANET TERROR
1:40MF 4:00 6:20 8:40LMF

3 VACANCY
12:25 2:30 4:35 6:40 8:40LMF

4 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (049) 837-0907

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 VACANCY
3 THE CONDEMNED
4 DIE HARD 4
5 TRANSFORMERS

LIPA
Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3684 (043) 312-5870

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 THE CONDEMNED
5 NEXT

DASMARINAS
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (046) 416-1332

1 TRANSFORMERS
2 THE CONDEMNED
3 VACANCY
4 HARRY POTTER 5
5 DIE HARD 4

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 VACANCY
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 BUG
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 DIE HARD 4
6 CAPE KARMA

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P90 / P95 (045) 892-2340

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 VACANCY
3 BORDERTOWN
4 NEXT

TARLAC

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 DIE HARD 4
TRANSFORMERS

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (045) 875-1927

1 BORDERTOWN
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 VACANCY
5 HARRY POTTER 5
6 NEXT

BACOLOD
Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 ZODIAC
3 VACANCY
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 RESERVE
6 DIE HARD 4

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P70.50 / P80.50 (033) 336-8070

1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 VACANCY
3 DIE HARD 4
4 HARRY POTTER 5
5 BUG
6 TRANSFORMERS

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POWER PLANT CINEMA

ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL: 898-1440/41 DOLBY DIGITAL

IN THE LAND OF WOMEN – PG13 1:30,3:40,5:50, 8:00,10:10	HARRY POTTER G 1:00,4:00 DIE HARD 4.0 – PG13 7:00,9:50	VACANCY – R13 2:20,4:20, 6:20,8:20,10:20
TRANSFORMERS – G 1:25,4:20,7:15,10:10	PLANET TERROR – R13 1:10,3:25,5:40,8:00	HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX G 1:45,4:40,7:35,10:30

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 HARRY POTTER: ORDER OF THE PHOENIX MTRCB GP
12:15, 3:10, 6:05, 9:00

2 HARRY POTTER: ORDER OF THE PHOENIX MTRCB. GP
2:10, 5:05, 8:00

3 TRANSFORMERS (GP) 12:40
DIE HARD 4.0 (PG-13) 4:00, 6:45, 9:30

4 HARRY POTTER : 5 (GP) 12:45, 3:40
TRANSFORMERS (GP) 6:35, 9:35

PREMIERE THEATRE
VACANCY (R-13) 1:20, 3:30, 5.40, 7:50, 10:00

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

Come to Shangri-La Plaza's Season-Ender sale.
Enjoy discounts of up to 70% OFF
from participating stores up to July 31.
See you at the Shang!

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EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851, loc: 171/ 170 or 633-2227
for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1: HARRY POTTER 5 — 10:30, 1:15, 4:05, 6:55, 9:45 — GP

CINEMA 2: PLANET TERROR — 12:20, 3:10, 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 — R - 13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a kind entertainment for all!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3: TRANSFORMERS — 12:15, 3:05, 5:50, 8:40 — GP

CINEMA 4: VACANCY — 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 10:00 — GP

CINEMA 5: HARRY POTTER 5 — 11:30, 2:15, 5:05, 7:55, 10:40 — GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

July 27, 2007	Weiss Nep " Feelin Las Vegas " The Repeat	8 30 PM
August 03 & 04, 2007	Joey Albert	8 30 PM
August 24 & 25, 2007	Ogie Alcasid & Regine Velasquez	8 00 PM

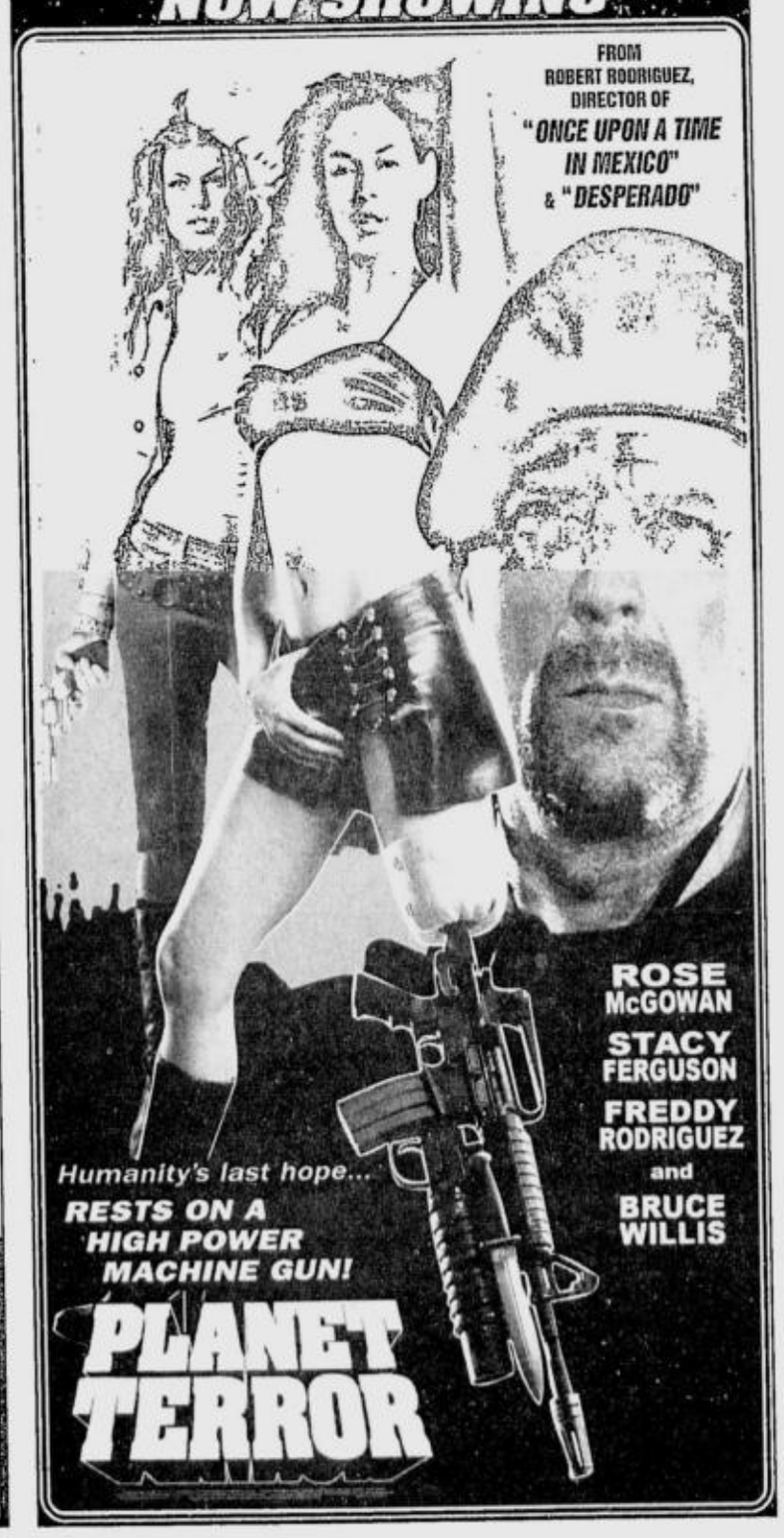
THE LAB'TORY — PROMENADE GREENHILLS

July 13, 20, 27, 2007	Drag - Ons	10 00 PM
August 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30	Cerrudo Classico	8:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722 4532 LOC 116

MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

NOW SHOWING



Toni has . . .

From page D1

ken?

Yes, twice. They're both from show biz. *Umasa kasi ako*. Catch me I'm fallin' *tapos hindi ako sinalo. Nahulog ako* (laughs).

Did you think that when you transferred to ABS-CBN that the network would take you seriously?

I took a very big risk. Life is just a matter of choice. I chose to transfer and I was prepared to face the consequences of the decisions I made.

Are you still friends with GMA 7 artists you worked with before?

Yes, especially with my former co-hosts in "Eat... Bulaga!" like Kuya Allan K and Paolo (Ballesteros). We still send text messages to each other. Once in a while, we have dinner.

How long have you been in show biz?

I was just 13 when I started. I joined a singing contest with Kyla and Faith Cuneta. I've struggled for seven years. The contest was my biggest break. It was right after that when I said show business will be my career.

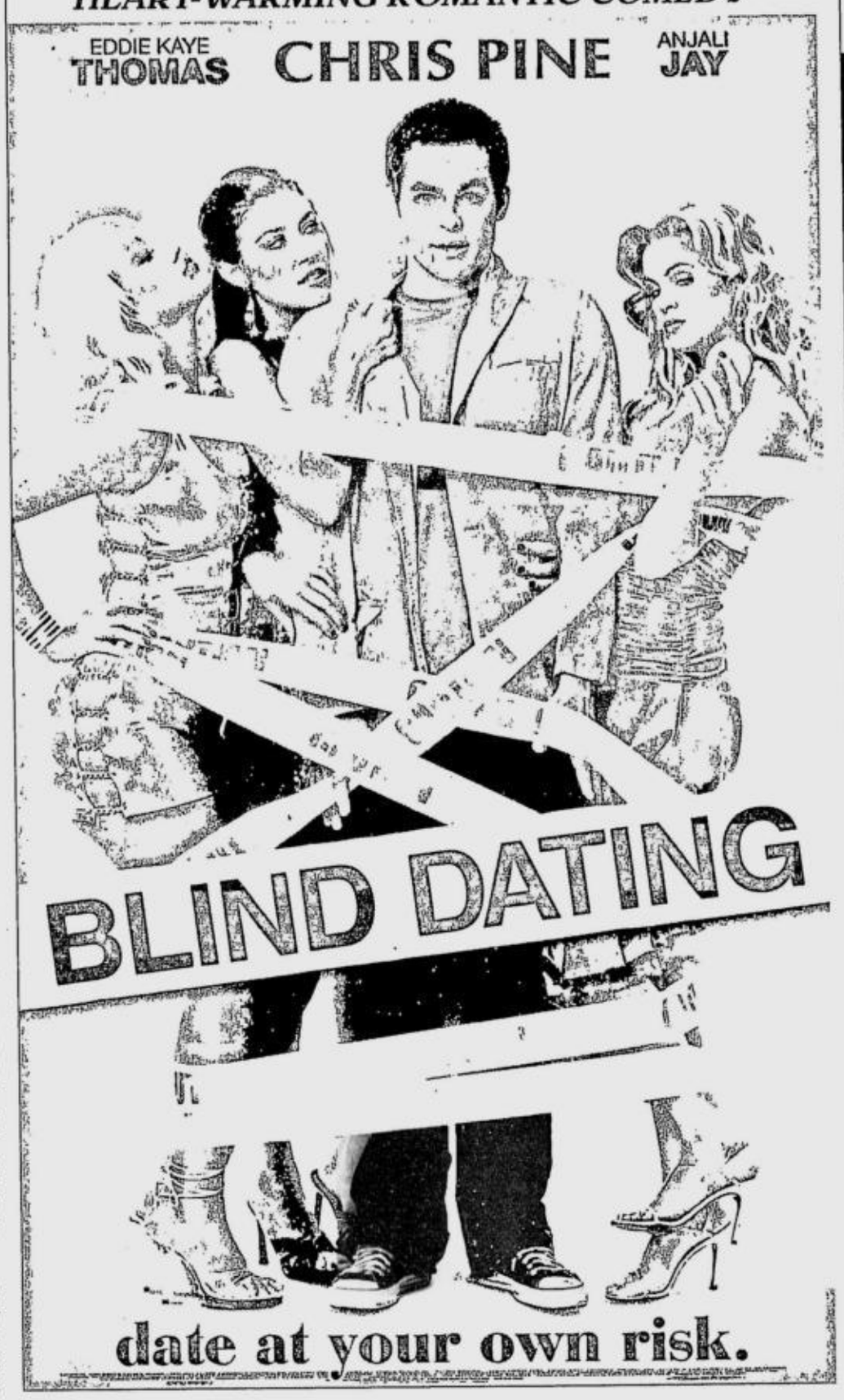
"Catch Me I'm Fallin" is the carrier single of Toni's sophomore album "Toni Gonzaga: Fallin' in Love" by Star Records.

MTRCB ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

OPENS TOMORROW

THE STAR OF "JUST MY LUCK" IS BACK IN ANOTHER HEART-WARMING ROMANTIC COMEDY

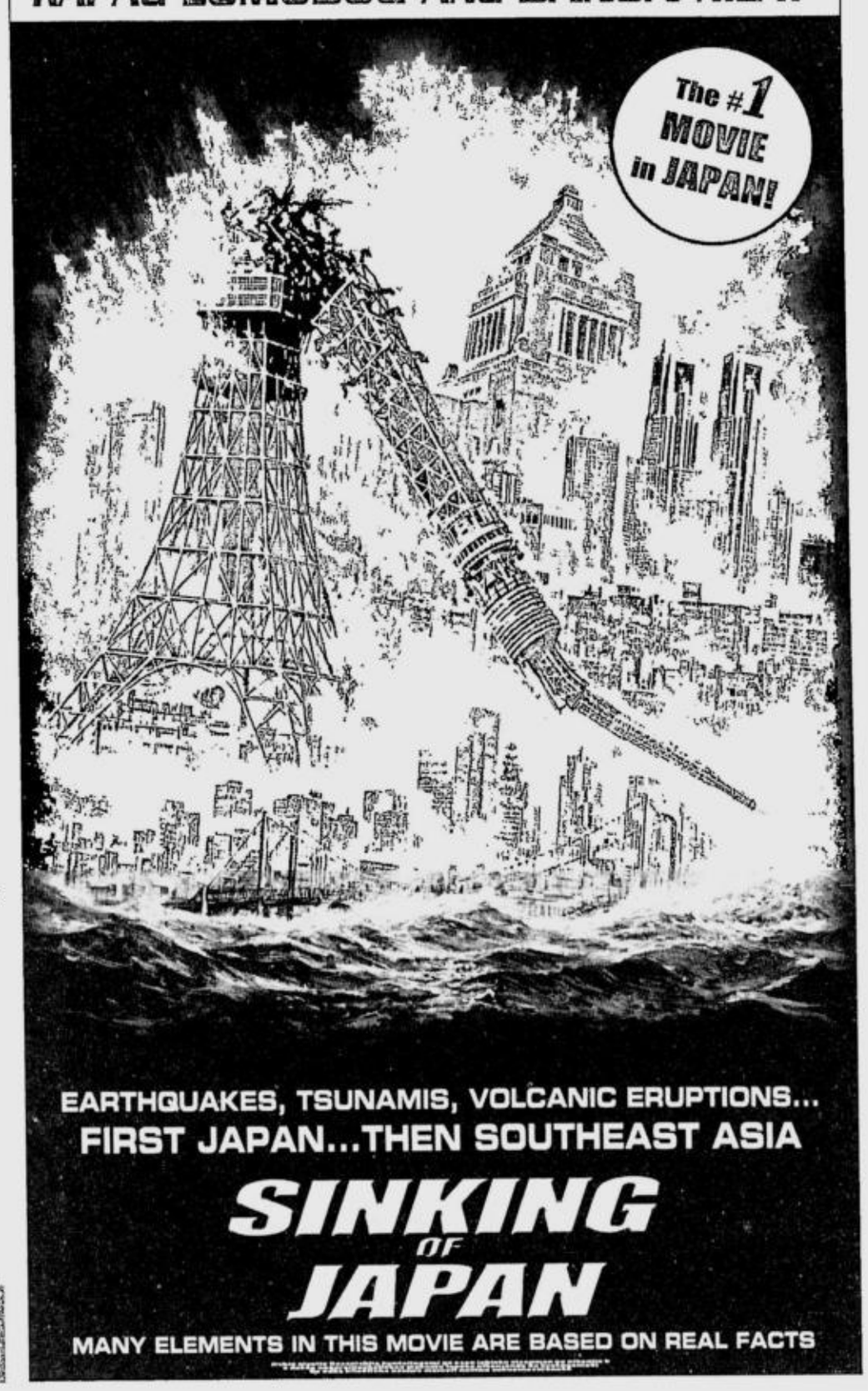
EDDIE KAYE THOMAS CHRIS PINE ANJALI JAY



MTRCB ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

OPENS AUGUST 1

TATANGGAP KAYA TAYO NG MGA HAPON KAPAG LUMUBOG ANG BANSA NILA?



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FIRST JAPAN...THEN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SINKING OF JAPAN

MANY ELEMENTS IN THIS MOVIE ARE BASED ON REAL FACTS

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

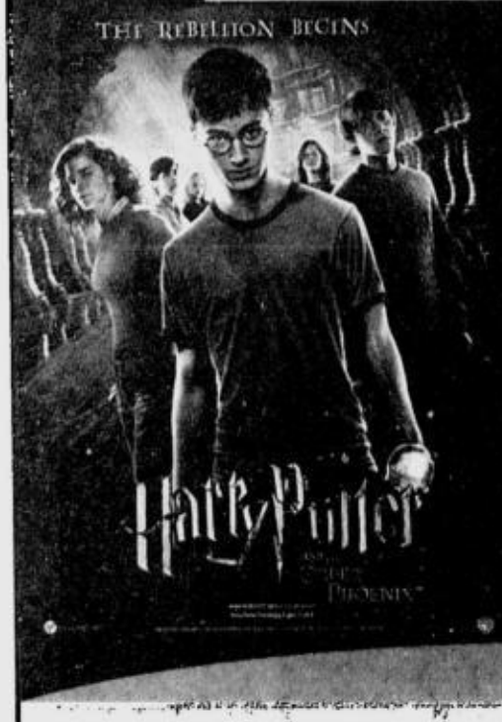
GLORIETTA 1	1 TRANSFORMERS	2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	3 PLANET TERROR	4 DIE HARD 4.0
GLORIETTA 4	1 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	2 DIE HARD 4.0	3 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN	5 VACANCY	6 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	7 TRANSFORMERS
GREENBELT 1	1 VACANCY	2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX		
GREENBELT 3	1 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS	4 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN GUARANTEED SEATS	5 VACANCY GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX		
	3 TRANSFORMERS	4 VACANCY	5 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	3 VACANCY	4 NEXT
MARKET! MARKET!	1 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	2 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN		
	3 WHITE NOISE 2: THE LIGHT	4 DIE HARD 4.0	5 VACANCY	
TRINOMA	1 WHITE NOISE 2: THE LIGHT	2 TRANSFORMERS	3 VACANCY GUARANTEED SEATS	4 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN GUARANTEED SEATS
• All-Stadium Seating • Computerized Ticketing System • Recliner Seats	5 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	6 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX	7 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

glorietta	Mechanical Imago July 27 to 29, 2007 at the Activity Center
GREENBELT	Shop & Travel at Greenbelt 1 Promo Get a chance to win exciting prizes and a trip for two to Boracay for every P300 worth of purchase at any Greenbelt 1 establishment from July 1 to September 30, 2007
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Clear Mall Animation Activation July 28 & 29, 2007 at the Activity Center
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Ciba Vision Exhibit July 27 to 29, 2007 at Paseos
MARKET! MARKET!	Metro Fashion Week July 13 to 31, 2007 at participating Metro departments
OnStage	Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids at REP's Globe Theater - Opens August 11, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
Ayala MUSEUM	KANDUNGAN - a solo exhibition of metal sculptures by Daniel dela Cruz July 24 to August 6, 2007 For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
TriNoma	BARBIE BIRTHDAY BASH July 1 (2PM & 4PM) at the Activity Center HUMAN'S RICO BLANCO EXHIBIT July 2 to 15 (Mall Hours) at the 1st Level Exhibit Area



Experience the magic!

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

at THX

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Alabang Town Center • Trinoma

where every seat is the best in the house

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For screening schedule, pls. call 729-7777
MTRCB Rating: General Audience

IMAGO ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

MECHANICAL ACTION

A theatrical circus performance of man-powered machines and acrobatic acts.

Glorietta Activity Center
July 27-29
11:30 am, 3 pm & 6 pm

Alabang Town Center Activity Center
August 17-19
11 am, 3 pm & 6 pm

TriNoma Activity Center
August 3-5
11:30 am, 3 pm & 6 pm

Ayala Center Cebu OnStage
August 24-26
1 pm, 4 pm & 6:30 pm

Market! Market! Activity Center
August 10-12
1 pm, 3:30 pm & 6 pm

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! TriNoma

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NOW SHOWING

SCREENING TIME	JULY 24 TUESDAY	JULY 25 WEDNESDAY	JULY 26 THURSDAY	JULY 27 FRIDAY	JULY 28 SATURDAY
11:00 AM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
2:00 PM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
5:00 PM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
8:00 PM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
11:00 PM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
SM MALL OF ASIA CINEMAS
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 VACANCY
3 WHITE NOISE
4 DIE HARD 4
5 PLANET TERROR
6 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
PREMIERE CINEMA
TRANSFORMERS
CENTERSTAGE
HARRY POTTER 5
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Bookings now accepted.
Inquire at 556-0655.
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
HARRY POTTER 5
CINEMA 2
TRANSFORMERS
633-8976
For ticket reservation, dial 6338976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 DIE HARD 4
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 HARRY POTTER 5
5 VACANCY
6 HARRY POTTER 5
7 TRANSFORMERS
8 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
9 WHITE NOISE
10 PLANET TERROR
11 HARRY POTTER 5
12 DIE HARD 4

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
2 VACANCY
3 HARRY POTTER 5
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 HARRY POTTER 5
6 DIE HARD 4
7 TRANSFORMERS
8 PLANET TERROR
9 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
10 HARRY POTTER 5
11 WHITE NOISE
12 TIYANAKS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 FIREHOUSE DOG
2 WHITE NOISE
3 HARRY POTTER 5
4 HARRY POTTER 5
5 TRANSFORMERS
6 VACANCY
7 HARRY POTTER 5
8 TIYANAKS
9 DIE HARD 4
10 TRANSFORMES
11 PLANET TERROR
12 THE GROOMSMEN

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 HARRY POTTER 5
4 VACANCY
5 DIE HARD 4
6 TIYANAKS
7 PLANET TERROR
8 FANTASTIC FOUR
9 WHITE NOISE
10 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 VACANCY
3 WHITE NOISE
4 PLANET TERROR
5 DIE HARD 4
6 TRANSFORMERS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 VACANCY
3 WHITE NOISE
4 HARRY POTTER 5
5 TRANSFORMERS
6 TIYANAKS
7 PLANET TERROR
8 DIE HARD
9 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 PLANET TERROR
3 WHITE NOISE
4 VACANCY

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 DIE HARD 4
3 HARRY POTTER 5
4 RESERVED
5 WHITE NOISE
6 HARRY POTTER 5
7 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN
8 VACANCY
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10 TRANSFORMERS
11 TIYANAKS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 VACANCY

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 VACANCY

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 WHITE NOISE
2 VACANCY
3 HARRY POTTER 5
4 PLANET TERROR

movietime
Event Calendar

Kids of all ages are invited to
Remy's Kitchen
A fun-filled activity for budding chefs
July 28 (Saturday)
at Mall of Asia Activity Area (near IMAX Theater)
Admission is free!
Participants are accepted on a first come, first served basis.
Sessions are at 1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 5:00 p.m.
Learn to be like Remy and Linguini in preparing mouth-watering desserts. Kids who prepared the best dessert will win special prizes. Plus, you can also buy your "Ratatouille" movie tickets in advance.
See you there!
Special Thanks to:
SM CINEMA SM SUPERMALLS
Distributed by Buena Vista International
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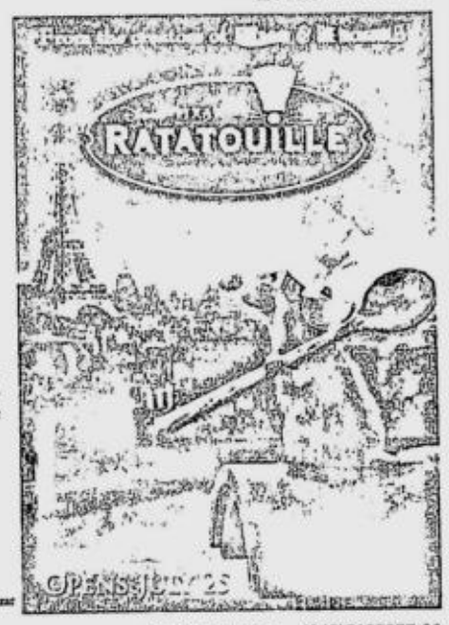


LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 TIYANAKS
2 ZODIAC
3 HARRY POTTER 5
4 VACANCY
5 DIE HARD 4
6 TRANSFORMERS
7 PLANET TERROR
8 HARRY POTTER 5

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 NEXT
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4
5 BORDERTOWN
6 VACANCY

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 VACANCY
4 HARRY POTTER 5

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 NEXT
4 28 WEEKS LATER

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9037681-85
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 BORDERTOWN
5 VACANCY
6 NEXT

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 DIE HARD 4
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 NEXT

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 28 WEEKS LATER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 VACANCY
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 HARRY POTTER 5

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 INVISIBLES
4 DIE HARD 4

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 CONDEMNED
3 VACANCY
4 HARRY POTTER 5

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 ZODIAC
3 VACANCY
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 DIE HARD 4
6 NEXT

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 HARRY POTTER 5
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 VACANCY
4 DIE HARD 4

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 RESERVED
3 HARRY POTTER 5
4 BUG
5 VACANCY
6 HARRY POTTER 5
7 RESERVED
8 DIE HARD 4

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 NEXT
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 VACANCY
5 HARRY POTTER 5
6 DIE HARD 4
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 VACANCY
2 HARRY POTTER 5
3 ZODIAC/ DIE HARD 4
4 TRANSFORMERS

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

One blockbuster after another

HAVE YOU NOTICED? PRACTICALLY FROM week to week this summer season, Hollywood trots out a new blockbuster that demolishes the competition, and does great holdover business in the next few weeks, besides.

The hit releases have come so fast and furiously that only a few local productions have "dared" to compete with them, making the likes of "Tiyanak," and "Paraiso" all the more admirable for their unsinkable resolve.

Hollywood's domination of the summer play dates is great for movie distributors and theater owners, but it makes for excessive competition for local producers.

That's why some of them are urging government officials to come up with practicable ways to protect and support the Filipino film industry from the onus of exceedingly heavy competition from foreign productions.

This could come in the form of a limit placed on the total of foreign movies that can be shown here annually, as imposed by some other countries. Or, more softly, grants and other incentives for deserving local movies could be made available, to make it easier for our film producers to recoup their investment.

What about our viewers, how do they feel about the competition provided by foreign blockbusters to the languishing Filipino movie industry? We raised this question at a recent media forum, and got an instructive variety of responses.

Viewer feedback

Some viewers agreed that local movies should be given preferential treatment and "defended" from the much larger and more expensive Hollywood blockbusters that dominate our screens. However, they balk at setting numerical limits, preferring instead that the government offer incentives to local producers.

Other viewers were less sympathetic, griping that they preferred to watch Hollywood movies because they got their "money's worth." They blamed local producers for the Filipino movie industry's current woes, saying that their predictable formats and lack of production values had driven viewers to patronizing foreign productions instead.

From these two extremes in terms of audience opinion, we get the feeling that grants and incentives are the way to go. At the same time, the leaders of our movie industry should mount a thorough campaign to get viewers to understand its current problems.

All too easily, viewers blame the industry for most if not all of its travails—which of course is far from the truth. The situation is too complex to be explained or "blamed" away quite so smugly or snidely.

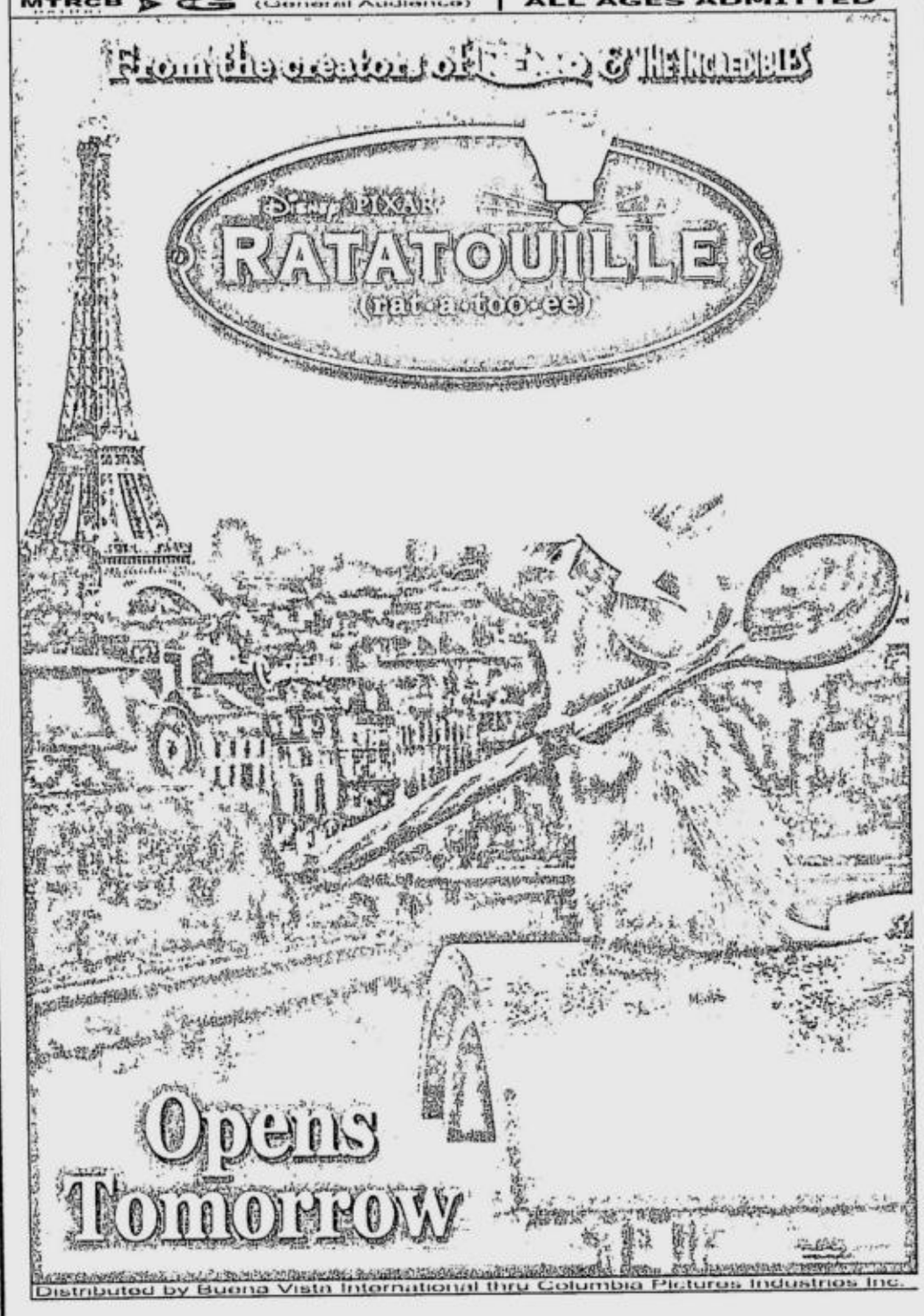
Support reforms

The point is, if the industry wants the viewing public to support reforms designed to help upgrade local movies, it needs to get viewers on its side. At the moment, this is far from being the case, so a lot of work needs to be done in this regard. So, our movie people should work hard together to regain the viewer loyalty they've lost.

Aside from a coordinated media campaign, the industry has to come up with better films, to counteract the view that local movies don't "deserve" to be supported.

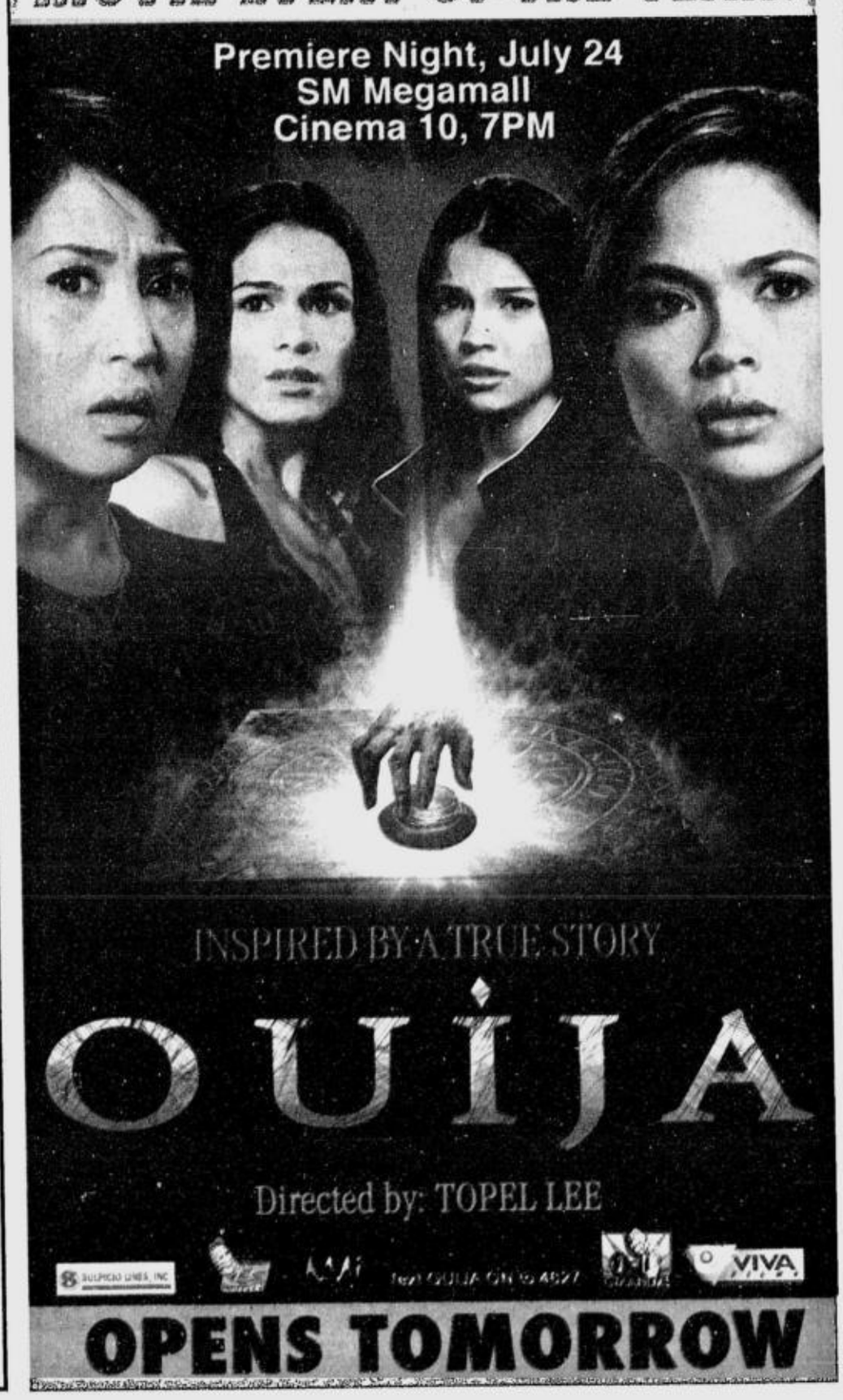
Finally, local stars shouldn't behave as shoddily as they have. The cheap behavior of some stars and starlets besmirches the reputation of all movie talents in the viewing public's eyes. So, the film industry needs to present a better face, if it expects to enjoy public support.

Unanimously recommended by the MTRCB!!!
MTRCB G (General Audience) | ALL AGES ADMITTED
From the creator of The Incredibles



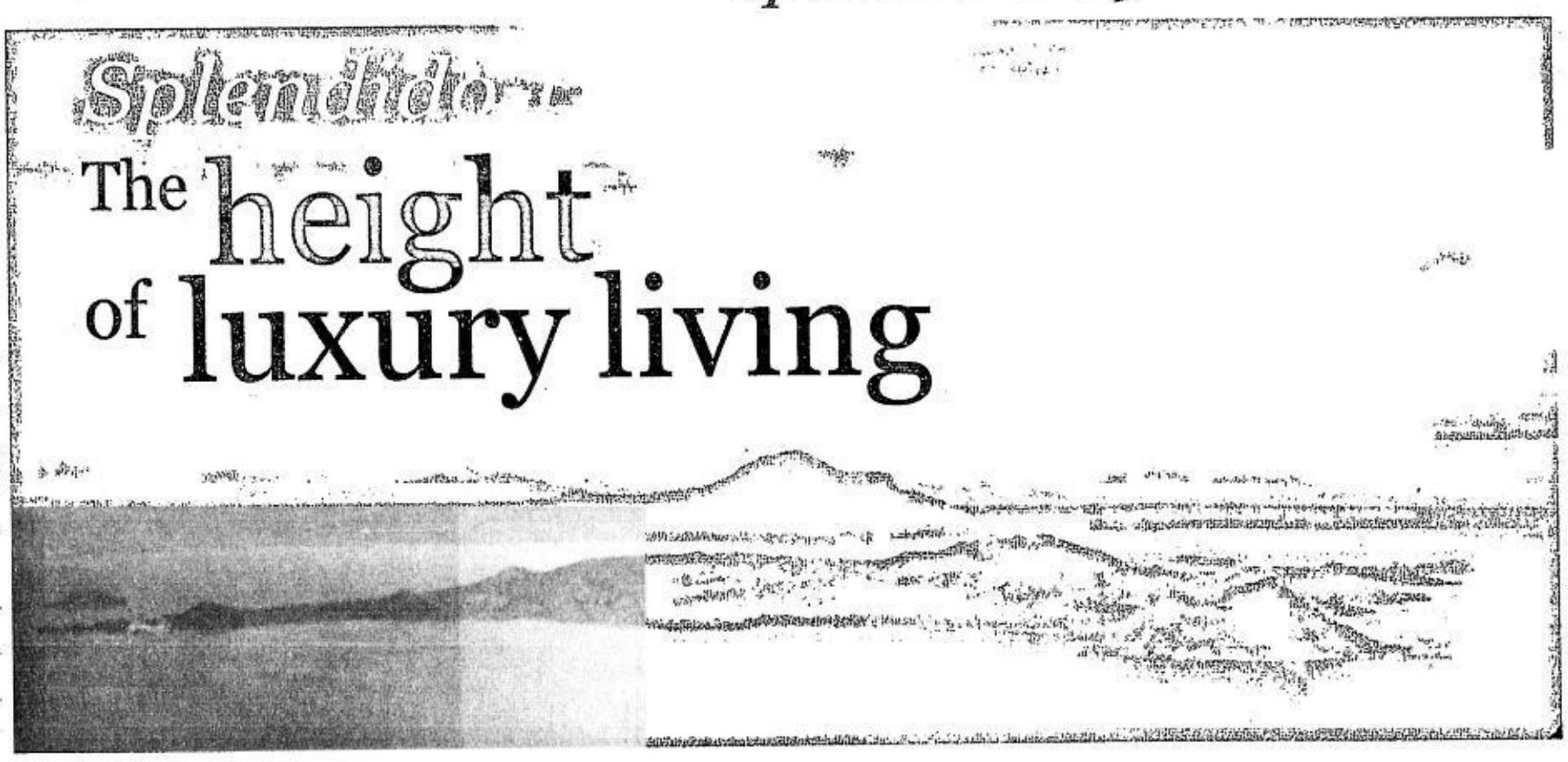
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures Industries Inc.

THE BIGGEST HORROR MOVIE EVENT OF THE YEAR!



Splendido

The height of luxury living



It all started with a legend.

The legend of an early Spanish settlement along the banks of Laeuna de Taal as it was called then, when the waters surrounding the volcano island was still salty from the sea water that encroaches unto it with the turning of the tide.

A community of comfort and luxury where the nobles can find sanctuary from the heat and confusion that is routine in the colonial capital. A community of peace and serenity where the friars and the clergy can seek refuge to rest and meditate. A community that was lost when the volcano island in one cataclysmic explosion buried the settlement in a debris of mud and pyroclastic materials.

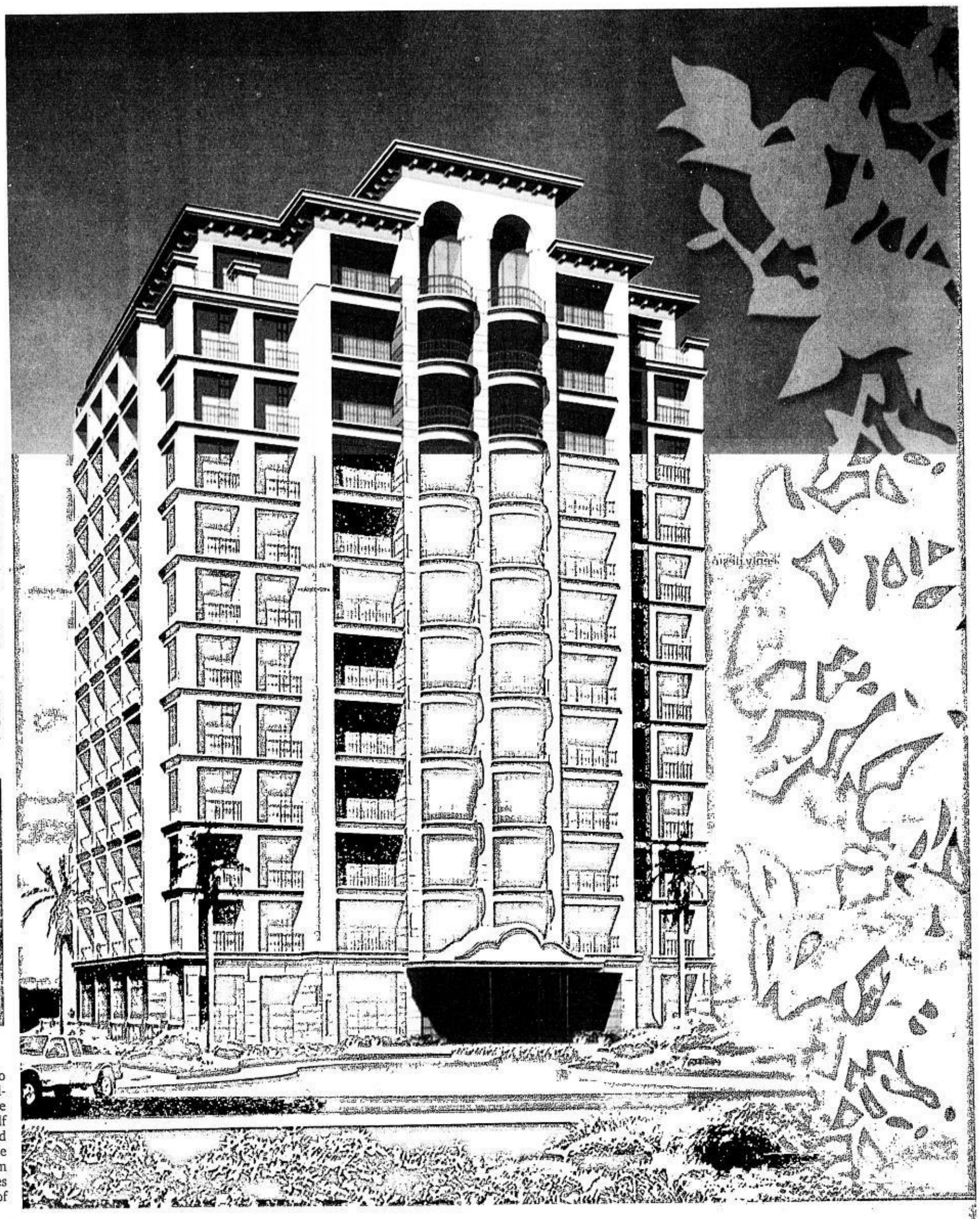
The memory of this community soon passed from history to legend as the violence that was Taal Volcano finally went to sleep. The spirit that inspired the creation of this community would have been lost forever, had not the remains of its buildings and structures been accidentally unearthed and its story revealed.

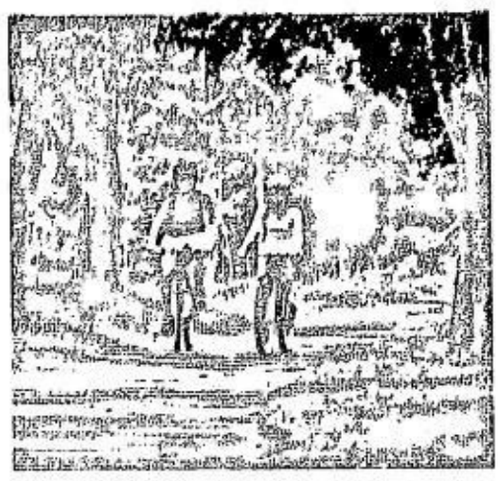
Today, a new community stands where this ancient settlement once stood, created to provide its new residents with the same kind of luxury, comfort and serenity that it did to the old—the Splendido Taal Residential, Golf and Country Club.

"Apparently, the legends of ancient sunken towns and settlements along the lake waters of Taal have proven to be true," said Katrina Ponce-Enrile, President and Chief Executive Officer of the JAKA Group of Companies. "We would like to believe that some of them were established to provide a luxurious haven where the nobility of the time and the privileged few can retreat to for purposes of rest and recreation."

"This is exactly the same kind of sanctuary and lifestyle that we would like to provide the residents of Splendido Taal," Ponce-Enrile explained.

"Being a part of the Splendido Taal community does not simply mean acquiring a residential lot or purchasing a condominium unit," she continued. "It means being able to enjoy living the kind of lifestyle that you deserve."





Enjoying a Lifestyle You Deserve

Indeed, lifestyle living is what Splendido Taal is all about. Master-planned to eventually become a self-sustaining community, the 250-hectare Splendido Taal Residential, Golf and Country Club consists of the greens and fairways of the Splendido Taal Golf Club, the residential subdivisions and condominium lots of the Splendido Taal Residential Estates and the sports and recreational facilities of the Splendido Taal Country Club.

The anchor development at Splendido Taal is the 60-hectare, 18-hole par 72 championship golf course of Splendido Taal Golf Club. Designed by "The Great White Shark" Greg Norman, the golf course is touted to be the only all-weather championship golf course in the Tagaytay Ridge area to date, and one of the most challenging in the country. Its signature hole is the picturesque Hole No. 8 which provides a mental challenge to golfers as it requires the player to carry over 200 yards across a dramatic ravine.

Sitting on top of a small rise that provides a postcard perfect view of both the Taal Lake and Volcano on one side and the golf course on the other is the golf clubhouse of Splendido Taal Golf Club with its distinctive Spanish Mission architecture designed by the renowned architectural firm of RR Payumo and Partners.

"There are two main dining areas in the golf clubhouse—The La Esquina Spanish Restaurant and the Ladera Golfers' Lounge," Ponce-Enrile said. "I personally supervised the conceptualization and development of the menu offerings of both restaurants with my good friends

HEIGHT/ E2

At Splendido Taal Towers, enjoy views of the Taal volcano
and the Taal Lake or the greens and fairways
of the Splendido Taal Golf Club from your window.

And with the Splendido Taal Country Club
a short walk away, you can be at the gym
or your favorite ballgame in a matter of minutes.

SPLENDIDO
TAAL TOWERS

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Most trusted and design-savvy

Very few residential locations offer the beauty of one of the world's natural wonders while keeping the conveniences of urban and cosmopolitan living close by.

This is why the luxurious Splendido Taal Towers in Tagaytay are destined to be among the most prized properties in the area.

Overlooking the world-famous Taal Volcano and the world-class greens and fairways of the Splendido Taal Golf Club, the Towers offer breath-taking views from its residential condominium units while at the same time, keeping unit owners close to Tagaytay City (only 10 minutes' drive) and Metro Manila, which is just 90 minutes away.

Most trusted property developer

Yes, the Splendido Taal Towers are prime property--but another reason why investors would be wise to get units is because Sta. Lucia Realty and Development Inc. is the property's developer.

Many satisfied homeowners have been happy to place their trust in Sta. Lucia for thirty-five years, but the company's competence, integrity and trustworthiness were recently given prestigious confirmation, when it was voted as one of Reader's Digest Asia's Most Trusted Brands for 2007 in the property development category.

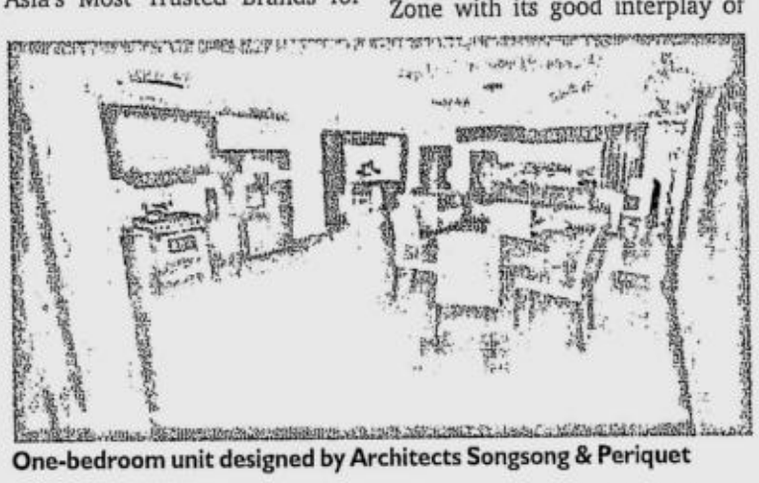
The polled upper market consumers consisting of 7,000 respondents belong to the top 50% of affluent consumers, chose Sta. Lucia Realty & Development, Inc. as being "clearly above competitors" when it comes to property development.

Excellent planning

Even as Sta. Lucia Realty has kept its solid position of strength in its core business, the company has also responded to the times and expanded to other business and developments through the leadership of its President & Chief Executive Officer Exequiel Robles.

A sound business sense and excellent planning has allowed the business to grow, giving it more opportunities to help Filipinos. Expansion meant that it was able to provide jobs to more Filipinos. Thousands of Filipino families were also given the chance to live in an impressive roster of communities in areas that include Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, and Batangas, as well as emerging areas such as Rizal, Pampanga, Cabanatuan City and Pangasinan.

In the Visayas, the company now has thriving communities in Cebu, Bacolod, and Iloilo and in Mindanao, there's the Riverfront Residential Estates in Davao considered to be an Eco-Tourism Zone with its good interplay of environment and business planning.



One-bedroom unit designed by Architects Songsong & Periquet

Beyond Residential

Striving to develop new markets, Sta. Lucia Realty has also become the country's leading developer of golf and country clubs. It now has twelve golf courses and five country clubs that include the Eagle Ridge Golf & Country Club believed to be the first and the largest golf development of its kind in Asia with its breathtaking 72-hole championship golf course designed by three golf masters including Greg Norman, Nick Faldo, Isao Aoki, together with the world's foremost golf architect Andy Dye.

Sta. Lucia Realty has also completed and operates first-class beach clubs in some developed provinces of the country including Club Morocco in Subic.

Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall, the biggest commercial, entertainment and leisure complex in the eastern part of Metro Manila remains a testament to serving a greater number of Filipinos. Its network of department stores, boutiques, fast food outlets, cinemas and other establishments provide the needs of residents of Sta. Lucia Realty's various communities in Cainta, Pasig, Marikina and Antipolo, as well as other towns in Rizal Province.

Environment-friendly

It is standard practice for Sta. Lucia Realty and Development Incorporated to respect the environment in all its property developments.

Yet another trusted name, this time in the field of architecture, W.V. Coscoluella and Associates, attests to Sta. Lucia's commitment to cater to the needs of residents while making sure no environmental damage occurs during development.

This is good news considering the furor over one particular property (foreign-owned) near the Taal Lake area that became controversial because of the danger it posed to the ecology.

"The site where the Splendido Taal Towers will rise gives the best view of Taal Lake and Taal Volcano within that particular area of the ridge," said William V. Coscoluella, principal architect of the architectural firm, adding that "in developing the area to allow the construction of the Towers, the strategy was to follow nature, not fight it."

Practicable design

Undoubtedly, the main reason for anyone to consider getting a unit at Splendido Taal Towers is the awesome view of Taal Lake and Taal Volcano, which has no peer in the entire world.

This is why Sta. Lucia and Coscoluella agreed on a "center core design" which is the best, most efficient layout for the Towers.

The center core design means that units line up and radiate from the building's center outward. The result is that, from the elevators, residents and visitors can access units by picking the right corridor and walking from the center to their units.

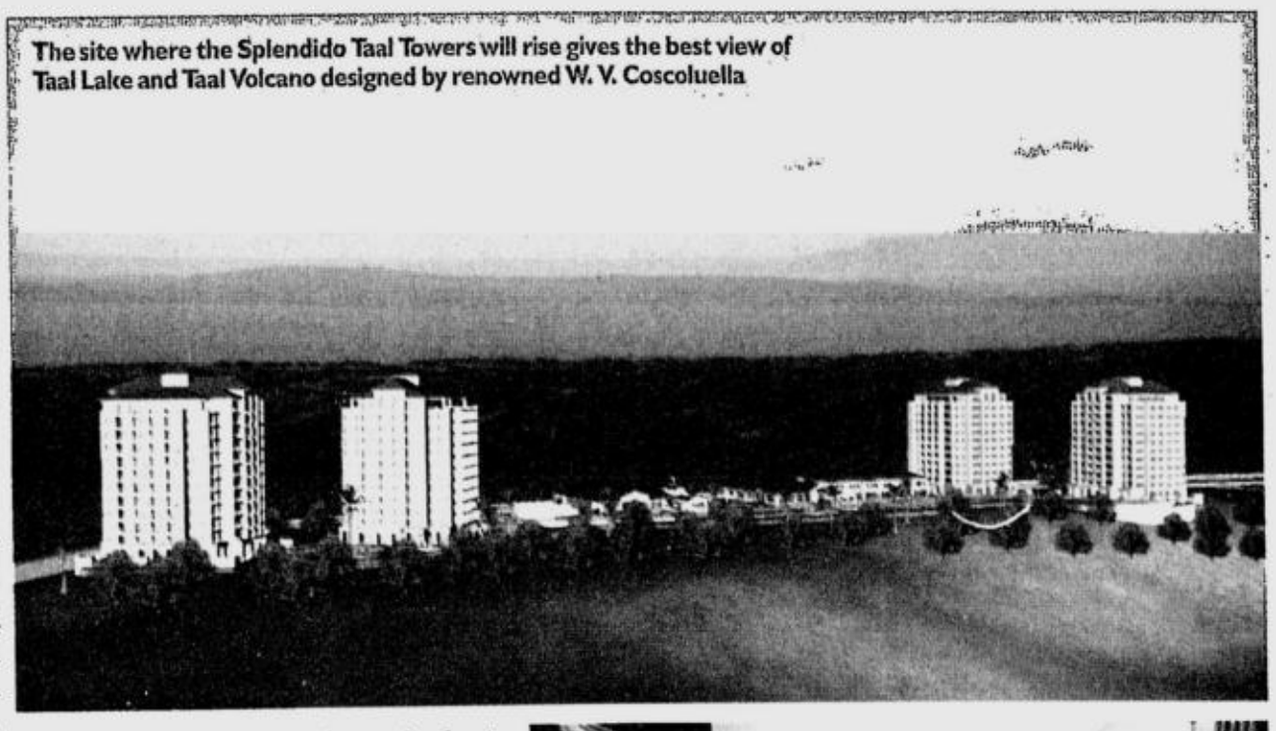
"That way, people don't have to walk around the building when trying to get to a particular unit. Every unit is accessible in a straight line radiating from the center," explained Coscoluella.

Coscoluella also said that the center core design also boosts enjoyment of the fantastic view. "The effect of such a design is to give a 360-degree view of Taal Lake and the Splendido golf course."

Furthermore, the design makes it easier for unit buyers to get bigger units by merging two or more units together.

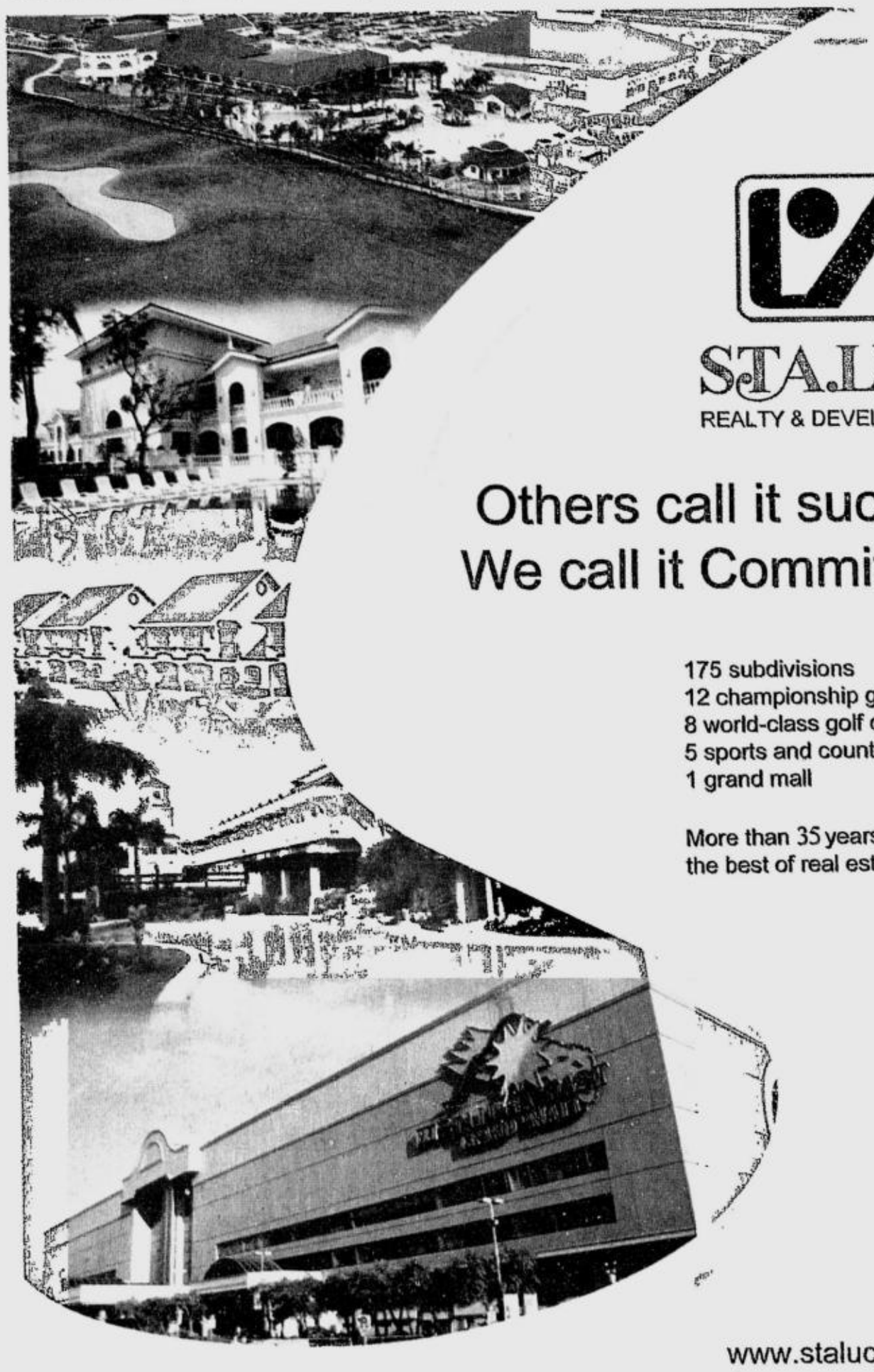
Coscoluella, who has worked with Sta. Lucia on many projects, holds a similar view of Sta. Lucia as the consumers polled by Readers' Digest.

"What's really good about Sta. Lucia is that the people there really do what they promise to clients and homeowners. They make sure that when they promise something, they are able to deliver it."



The site where the Splendido Taal Towers will rise gives the best view of Taal Lake and Taal Volcano designed by renowned W. V. Coscoluella

Splendid view right from your window



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The height of luxury living

From page E1

Chef Ed Quimson and Chef Heny Sison."

"It would seem that we were able to create a perfect harmony between the unique charm and understated elegance of the golf clubhouse and the food that we serve at the two restaurants that Splendido Taal is now becoming the preferred wedding destination in Tagaytay," Ponce-Enrile continued.

The golf course is set right in the middle of the 90-hectare Splendido Taal Residential Estates, providing the perfect backdrop for the residential and condominium lots of the development. "Most of the residential lots in the residential estate portion of Splendido Taal are clustered into small enclaves of their own for added security," she added. "The whole development itself is girthed by a 100-hectare forest which provides a sense of seclusion and privacy for the residents, as well as an additional security buffer zone."

The Four Towers

From a vantage point reaching twelve stories high right at the heart of the Splendido Taal Residential Estates, condominium unit owners of the soon-to-be constructed Splendido Taal Towers will be provided with either a magnificent view of the Taal Lake and Volcano or the majestic greens and fairways of the Splendido Taal golf course from right out of their windows.

"More than anything else, it will be these panoramic views of the volcano and the golf course that will provide a premium to condominium living at Splendido Taal,"said Exequiel Robles, President and Chief Executive Officer of Sta. Lucia Realty & Development, Inc..

"To ensure privacy and comfort to condominium unit owners, each of the four luxury condominium buildings of Splendido Taal Towers will only have a total of 142 residential units, consisting of 48 studio pads, 66 one-bedroom apartments and 28 two-bedroom suites ranging from forty to one hundred

square meters. Consistent with the Spanish-Mission theme of the Splendido Taal development, Splendido Taal Towers will be designed along the same architectural concept," he said.

To be constructed simultaneous with the four luxury condominium buildings of Splendido Taal Towers, the clubhouse facilities of the Splendido Taal Country Club are seen to provide Splendido Taal residents with the latest in sports and recreational activities. "Each residential lot owner of the Splendido Taal Residential Estates and condominium unit owner of the Splendido Taal Towers will be provided with assignee rights to the Splendido Taal Country Club," Robles continued. "This will provide them with full access to the facilities of the country clubhouse."

Among others, the facilities of the country club will include fine dining restaurants, a coffee shop, a bar and a game room, covered courts for basketball, tennis and badminton, a fully equipped gymnasium, a day spa and massage facilities, a bowling alley as well as a recreational swimming pool and a kiddie pool.

For more information on Splendido Taal Towers, please contact the Fil-Estate Group of Marketing Companies at telephone numbers (02) 635-0128, (02) 637-2928, (02) 634-2295 or at cellphone number (0917) 4163575 and experience the height of luxury living that you deserve.

East meets west in Splendido Taal's culinary dream team

One is already a well-respected name in Manila's gastronomic circles. The other is a fast-rising star with a growing collection of international culinary awards tucked under his belt. One is a bon vivant instilled since birth with old-world flair and gentlemanly ways. The other is a multi-tasking Gen-X, just as comfortable pumping iron weights at the gym as he is wielding an iron skillet in the kitchen. Their names are Chef Ed Quimson and Chef Tristan Bayani – and together, they are the new culinary dream team of Splendido Taal Golf Club located along the Tagaytay Ridge.

Chef Ed Quimson and Chef Tristan Bayani

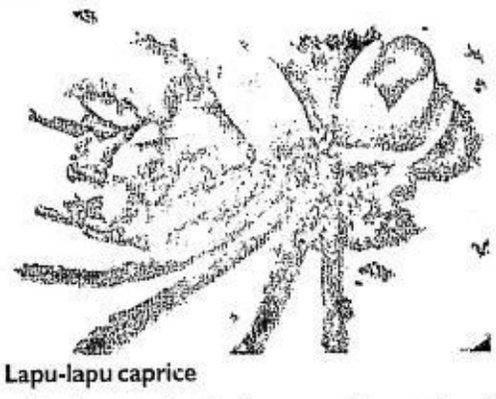
Master of western cuisine

Chef Ed carved out a name in the local culinary scene with his innovative take on food. His travel and work experiences in the United States and in various European countries including France, Spain, and Germany all influenced his cooking style and finely tuned his sense of taste.

According to Chef Ed, he learned all about the subtleties of various cuisines while traveling across Europe. "Traveling is the best learning experience in the whole world!", he enthused. "You not only get to know the right techniques used while preparing regional specialties, but you also get to know how the food should properly taste."

"From different countries, different cultures, the different types of food. You get to know what kind of spices are properly used for what food. Like in Germany, they use a lot of seeds for their sausages but for actual cooking, they don't use spices. In south of France, they use a lot of spices as compared to the north. In Milan, they tend to use more butter whereas in Rome, the preference is for olive oil – all of these things, these details, which are important in cooking are not taught in school", he emphasized.

"Since I love eating, cooking came alive for me. Now, when I cook, I have the memory of how it should taste in my mind. So by the time I finish cooking, the taste in my mind and the actual flavor of the dish matches. You cannot learn these things from any school or read from any cookbook."



Lapu-lapu caprice

"Being unorthodox in my cooking styles, I have no boundaries, no borders! But when you study 'cooking', you're bound by rules. For example, back in 1991, I infused an herb into a dessert, and they said 'You never do those things.' Six years later, it became known as fusion!", Chef Ed impishly recalls.

Apprenticed in eastern fare

For Chef Tristan, the road to the culinary arts was a circuitous one. He initially studied Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of Santo Tomas. Later, he finished a business degree from AMA Computer College with the intention of later joining the family business. However, fate intervened one day when his sister who wanted to study cooking in Heny Sison's school couldn't make it and sent Tristan in her stead. His interest piqued, Tristan then took up and finished a course in Essential Cooking and Baking under Chef Jill Sandique.

Tristan's first crack as a sous chef started at Filos upon the recommendation of Ms. Heny Sison. Impressed by the promise shown by the young man, Chef Ed became his mentor. Thus, paving the way for the two chefs to bring their cooking expertise in many other projects.

Today, at the age of 30, Chef Tristan has already earned an impressive array of international culinary awards. Among them are: a 1st prize at the Michigan Food Competition in 2004, and a 2nd prize at the Key West Florida Hotel & Restaurant Foodfest (two-appetizer division) in 2004.

Last year, while completing a six-month culinary scholarship, Chef Tristan participated in the 2006 Seoul International Culinary Competition, and bagged the silver medal in the appetizer segment.

When queried about favorite cuisines, Chef Tristan replied with an enthusiastic pump of a fist, "I like Asian cooking because of the wide range of taste and flavors that it imparts, but I still prefer Filipino home-cooked meals and regional specialties. That's why Pinoy food rocks!"

What makes food taste good? Tristan has this to say: 'Taste is the primary determinant of what makes food 'good'. I know that as a chef, I should cater to the different senses of sight, scent and taste, but you don't really hear people say 'Let's go to this restaurant, their plating looks good'; rather, people say 'Let's go to this restaurant, they serve great food there!'"

"Chef Ed and I have similar tastes. We have the same way of cooking. We both love experimenting", he said. "We're food scientists!"

A well-traveled master chef with a flair for continental dishes and an innovative new generation chef that has mastered the zen of Asian cuisine – both with a passion for culinary excellence. Meet Splendido Taal's new culinary dream team. Chef Ed Quimson. Chef Tristan Bayani.

Discover the new dishes of the new culinary dream team at Splendido Taal Golf Club's Ladera Golfers' Lounge and La Esquina Spanish Restaurant.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2007

People, Events & Products

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Sta. Lucia Realty rides on Batangas progress through Lipa Royale Estates

LIPA ROYALE ESTATES, STA. LUCIA REALTY and Development Corp's prime residential haven in Lipa City, Batangas, opens more doors to a grand urban lifestyle in the south with the rise of its fifth phase, The Edinburgh Place.

With the launch of Edinburgh's over 600 new lots this month, Lipa Royale offers a heightened standard of living only two hours away from Manila in the heart of Lipa City. Conveniently located along the Star Tollway, access to Lipa Royale's The Edinburgh Place is a breeze.

At Lipa Royale, residents enjoy a peaceful, comfortable lifestyle protected by 24/7 security and enhanced by community perks and amenities. Here, living's noble statement is reflected on the community's lush gardens, beautiful homes, landscaped parks, and highly maintained roads and systems. Modern sports amenities such as a fully equipped gym, tennis courts, basketball courts, and a swimming pool that can double as a party venue will delight kids and adults alike. The paved sidewalks with its promenade trees also provide good jogging trails.

Lipa Royale's ideal location in the progressive city of Lipa allows residents to enjoy an urban lifestyle-complete with the convenience of business centers and commercial establishments-that merges with the relaxing feel of a tropical landscape and a mild climate all year round. Nestled in a valley between Mt. Malarayat and Mt. Makulot, Lipa is a low-risk area, with natural wind breakers that shield it from typhoons.

Lipa City also offers diverse culture and leisure time activities as it is the home of significant heritage sites, eco-tourism circuits, and religious shrines. The city also offers world-class golf in Summit Point and Club Malarayat, shopping and entertainment at nearby shopping centers, and hospital and medical services at the Lipa Medical Center.

Lipa's proximity to major highways such as the South Luzon Expressway and the J. P. Laurel Highway, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, shopping centers, golf clubs, and schools make Lipa a preferred residential center and a favorite weekend getaway that never fails to delight residents and tourists.

Young executives and growing families are also assured of the Sta. Lucia brand of quality and price at Lipa Royale Estates with lots ranging from P400,000 to P1.1 M and house and lot packages starting at P2.1 M to P4.2 M.

For inquiries, please call Asian Pacific Realty & Brokerage Corp at 911-2240, 921-9493, 912-9496, Lipa Branch at (043)756-2130 or visit www.apgc.com.ph.

METROCAR GREAT RATES SALE

Metrobank has launched the MetroCar Great Rates Sale, a promotion that offers special rates to car buyers who will avail of the Metrobank MetroCar auto loan package from any of the bank's Metro Manila branches. Metrobank depositors will be entitled to an additional rate reduction. Metrobank has partnered with Toyota Manila Bay, Ford Global City, Honda Cars Pasig, Hyundai Quezon Avenue, Isuzu Inteco Edsa, Kia Motors Greenhills, Mitsubishi Citimotors Inc, and Nissan UN Avenue for this promotion. Promo period is from June 29 to Sept. 30 only. In photo during the ribbon cutting ceremony held at the Power Plant Mall are (front row from left) Toyota Cubao Inc president Leo Ferreria, Metrobank Consumer Lending Group head Rowena Oliveros, Kia Motors assistant sales manager Cheryl Bravo, Nissan UN Avenue Manila president Leo Lei, Toyota Manila Bay Corp president Henry Sy, (second row from left) Metrobank chair Antonio Abacan Jr., and Metrobank National Branch Banking head Fabian Dee.

BPI STILL NO. 1 IN OVERSEAS REMITTANCE

The Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) was once again awarded by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) as the number one bank for OFW remittances, for the second time in a row. BPI's efforts have resulted in OFW remittances totaling almost USD3 billion, 25 percent of the total remittances in the country for 2006. Photo shows BPI president Aurelio R. Montinola III (center) accepting the award from BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. Also in photo is BPI senior vice president Teresita Tan.

FREE MEDICINES FOR THE POOR

Officials of United Laboratories Inc endorse free medicines and vitamins to Odyssey Foundation Inc, the corporate social responsibility arm of CDO-Foodsphere Inc, for the latter's distribution to the less-privileged sector of our society. Present during the turnover ceremony held recently at the Unilab office in Mandaluyong City were (from left) Raymond Santiago, Wesley Isleta, Ronnie Origenes, Eleanore Erguiza, the foundation's social worker, and Pave Miras. Free healthcare products are distributed by Odyssey Foundation to complement its Gabay Buhay supplemental feeding program, an initiative to ease malnutrition in the country.

TREI INKS CONTRACT WITH PR/EVENTS PARTNERS

A bold new concept in experiential lifestyle living comes to fore with TREi - a lifestyle membership club that offers unique experiences through high-end products and services that dovetail with its members' unique lifestyle needs. TREi's array of prestigious brand partners provides its members with VIP privileges, preferential rates and guaranteed space with all its partner establishments ranging from travel, dining, shopping, sports and fitness, wellness and virtually all types of lifestyle services. The company recently formalized its agreement with its PR and events partners in preparation for its forthcoming grand launch in September. Photo shows: (from left) ALV Consultus Advertising Inc president Arnold Vegafria, TREi COO Pam Pascual, PR consultant Girlie Rodis, ALV Consultus Advertising creative director Jun Poblador and TREi director of operations Pops Del Rosario.

Gonzales convenes disaster council to prepare for typhoons

DEFENSE OFFICER-IN-CHARGE and National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) Chair Secretary Norberto B. Gonzales ordered the pre-positioning of military personnel and relief supplies and equipment in areas frequently hit by typhoons. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is a major component of the country's national disaster preparedness program.

In a coordinating meeting held at the NDCC Operations Center, Secretary Gonzales instructed the AFP to anticipate and coordinate with Pagasa so that soldiers will be pre-positioned to prevent being 'caught in the middle of a typhoon.'

"I hope you don't mind because we might be wasting our time if we go to certain areas where we are expecting floods or landslides, and it did not happen. But I believe that is our duty to do so," Secretary Gonzales said.

During the meeting, Secretary Gonzales was briefed by representatives from NDCC member-agencies on disaster-preparedness measures undertaken by each agency.

The Disaster Response Task Force of the AFP reported that engineering units are scattered all over the country to immediately respond to disaster.

DPWH informed Secretary Gonzales that regional and district engineers are already on standby in case of any eventuality that will be brought by tropical storms.

Representative from the DSWD said that they currently have a total standby funds and stockpile amounting to P39.4 million.

On the report of the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) that more than 800 steel and wooden poles were either toppled, broken or left leaning by previous super typhoons Milenyo and Reming, Secretary Gonzales directed to look into other ways of transmitting power to address power interruptions every time a typhoon strikes.

"Maybe instead of above ground, it should be below ground. I know it's going to be expensive, but if our above ground lines are destroyed every year, maybe in the long run, we will have to look for this kind of solution," Secretary Gonzales said.

"We should be able to see from our experiences; we have this every year. And depending on the signal, we can probably anticipate already what kind of damage it could cause. And the most important is for our national departments to be there right away even before the calamity hits," Secretary Gonzales concluded.

BITS Clips

PMA's StratMark

AN ARMY OF SAVVY STUdents, businessmen and marketing professionals are once again bound to flock the Araneta Coliseum on July 27, for the annual Strategic Marketing Conference and Competition, an event organized by Philippine Marketing Association (PMA), the country's premiere marketing organization. Featuring father of guerilla marketing Jay Conrad Levinson, this conference aims to bring out the guerilla entrepreneurs in every student and marketing professional in the country, and help them succeed in their own enterprise. With the theme "Guerilla Marketing Revolution," the talks hope to help participants find out how they can implement unconventional ways of expanding their respective companies' markets while also maximizing their profits. Araneta Group of Companies' senior vice president for Marketing Grace Magno, Asian Institute of Management Baguio Chapter governor and International Learning Styles Network's chair Henry Tenedero Lim, and Brandlab's chief executive officer and chair Jos Ortega, will also be speaking during the event. Revered bands, Hale and Sugarfree, will provide the students and marketing professionals, live entertainment in between talks. Organized by PMA in time for the national marketing month, this year's Strategic Marketing Conference aims to widen the horizons of its participants so that they may be properly equipped with the things that they will need when they finally embark on their respective spheres. Coinciding with the conference is a competition for students where PMA will once again put young minds to test so they may be pushed to think innovatively and creatively to produce and subsequently defend marketing tactics. Hoping to give the students the opportunity to test their grit on mutual alertness, strategic thinking, creative abilities, and verbal skills, StratMark is PMA's way of challenging the young generation to present world-class marketing strategies this early in their lives. Cash prizes, plaque, individual medals, and certificates await the winning team. For more information, you may contact the PMA Secretariat at 638-7700, 636-4608 or 687-3323.

Unilab develops EZTab

SCIENTISTS AT THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST AND leading pharmaceutical and healthcare company United Laboratories Inc (Unilab) recently developed EZTab, the newest breakthrough technology for children's medicine that makes compliance much easier for children. Developed by PediaTech, Unilab's research and development arm dedicated to developing innovative solutions in child care, EZTab dissolves tablets in the mouth in less than 30 seconds even without water, thus making medicines much easier for children to swallow. It also contains flavor beads that significantly improve the taste of the medicine, making it ideal for children to take. "EZTab demonstrates Filipinos' ingenuity in scientific research and development," notes Unilab president and CEO Carlos C. Ejercito. "This affirms Unilab's commitment to innovation by developing proprietary technologies that help make high quality healthcare products available to Filipinos, adults and children alike. "EZTab technology is now used in Kastair Tablet. Kastair EZTab contains montelukast, a drug prescribed for the maintenance treatment of chronic asthma, prevention of exercise-induced asthma, and the relief of symptoms of seasonal allergic rhinitis including nasal congestion, nasal itching, and sneezing. Kastair EZTab also contains cherry-flavored beads that are quickly dissolved in the child's mouth, releasing a great-tasting flavor that makes compliance much easier for kids.

Grand Barista Cup at Wofex

ALLEGRO BEVERAGE CORP AND DA VINCCI Syrups will sponsor the Grand Barista Cup during the World Food Expo on Aug. 2, at the World Trade Center. Some of the country's best baristas will compete under international barista competition regulations, showcasing the best in the art of brewing coffee in terms of blending, style, creativity, and presentation. Eventual winner will be the country's representative to the Asian Barista Cup in Singapore. Wofex 2007, the 7th International Exposition on Worldwide Food Beverage, Technology & Machinery, to be held Aug. 1 to 4; continues to be the home of the most innovative culinary competitions as well as the biggest and most effective trade show for the food and beverage industry. Co-located Events include Baker's Fair, Taste Expo, FoodMach 2007 Expo, and the World Food Summit. For inquiries, log on to www.wofex.com or call Premier Events Plus Group Inc at 929-7993, 929-7963, 432-4209; or e-mail info@PEPGroup.com.

Blessing, launching of Cokaliong Shipping Lines' newest interisland vessel

INAUGURATION of MV Filipinas Cebu of the Cokaliong Shipping Lines at the Cebu port. Cutting the ceremonial ribbon are (from left) Mrs Gregoria Cokaliong, the family matriarch; Loh Wai Kiew, CEO of Shell Marines Products Ltd in London; Cebu City Vice Mayor Michael Rama; Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia; shipping lines founder and CEO, COO Chester Cokaliong and former Cebu first district congressman Jose Gullas. The affair was attended by hundreds of well-known and prominent business personalities and government officials last July 14 at the Cebu port.

WARM welcome. Philippine Daily Inquirer president Alexandra 'Sandy' Prieto-Romualdez (left) with husband Philip and their two sons, are warmly welcomed by Chester Cokaliong, CEO and COO of the Cokaliong Shipping Lines, aboard MV Filipinas Cebu during the blessing and inauguration of the vessel.

SINAG JOINS WORLD SOLAR CHALLENGE

Students from the Mechanical Engineering and Electronic and Communications Engineering Departments of De La Salle University-Manila with Philippine Solar Car Challenge Society Inc chair Vince Perez, DLSU chancellor Dr. Carmelita Quebengco and overall technical team leader professor Rene Fernandez, recently received the solar panel that will power Sinag, the first philippine solar-powered car, from Greg Reichow, SunPower VP for operations. The pioneering project will produce the country's first entry to the prestigious World Solar Challenge in Australia in October.

HOTEL LA CORONA WINS DTI-CIC SEARCH FOR MODEL COMPANIES 2007

The Hotel La Corona group bagged three major awards for its exemplar programs in the categories of Labor Management Relations, Family Welfare and Community Relations and Quality and Productivity from the Department of Trade and Industry's Center for Industrial Competitiveness (DTI-CIC) Pro-Active Programs Achievement Award Search for Model Companies 2007. Photo shows, the La Corona Hotel officers and labor management group receiving the awards with (4th from left) La Corona Hotel managing director Ian Angelo King, CEO Archie King and COO Willie Go with DTI Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez. The La Corona Hotel group is composed of Best Western Hotel la Corona-Manila, Hotel La Corona de Lipa and La Corona de Pagsanjan Resort and Training Center.